DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 570 JC 870 242

AUTHOR	Bilson, Barbara, Ed.; Kurilich, Frances, Ed.
TITLE	Inside English: Journal of the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges; Vol. VII, Nos. 1-4, September 1980, December 1980, March 1981, and June 1981.
INSTITUTION	English Council of the California Two-Year Colleges.
PUB DATE	81
NOTE	34p.; This journal is printed in oversize form (11.5 x 14.5). All pages have been photographically reduced by ERIC to standard size (8.5 x 11) before microfiching. For the complete archival compilation of volumes 1-13 of "Inside English," see ED 272 238.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Inside English; v7 n1-4 Sep-Jun 1980-1981
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Basic Skills; *College English; Community Colleges; *English Curriculum; *English Instruction; Instructional Improvement; Literature; *Remedial Instruction; Student Placement; *Teaching Methods; Two Year Colleges; *Writing (Composition); Writing Instruction; Writing Processes; *Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

Designed primarily for English faculty at two-year colleges in California, "Inside English" includes articles on instructional innovations in teaching remedial writing, literature courses, and freshman composition, and on major curricular, administrative, and employment issues in the field. The four issues in volume 7 contain the following feature articles: (1) "Outside English," by Wayne Wolski; (2) "Composition Teaching Load and the Community College Teacher: Resolutions and Recommendations; (3) "Writing Competence Across the Curriculum: A Program That Works," by Mary Spangler; (4) "Developing Fluency, Form, and Control: Pilot Course in Basic Skills," by Helen Gordon and Dorothy Bray; (5) "When the Paper Monster Chews a Hole in Your Future," by Francine L. DeFrance; (6) "Let's Have Them Write," by Shirley Sykes; (7) "The Professional vs the College Writer: Garrison Rethought," by Kevin J. Ryan; (8) "What's Happening in Freshman Comp: A Sabbatical Project," by Helena (Currie) Hale; (9) "Rhetoric as Implied Science," by Don K. Pierstorff; (10) "Revitalizing English Faculty at Santa Barbara City College," by Elinor Flewellen; (11) "The Student, He," by Margaret Boegeman; (12) "Composition Made Easy: Or a Method for Teaching Writing So Simple Even a Literature Major May Understand It," by Donald L. White; (13) "What Do We Do about Literature?" by John C. Lovas; (14) "Literature Courses--Then and Now," by Miriam B. Beckwith; (15) "The Liveliest Literature or Is Bergman Really Gynt's Peer?" by Gary Hoffman; (16) "Science Made Easy: Or a Method for Teaching Science So Simple Even a Paleomicrobiologist Can Understand It," by Donald S. Pratt. (AYC)

inside english

Journal of the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges

VOL. VII, NOS. 1-4

SEPTEMBER 1980,
DECEMBER 1980,
MARCH 1981,
AND
JUNE 1981

ED288570

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JC 870 242

EDITOR: BARBARA BILSON

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: FRANCES KURILICH

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ENGLISH COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA ECCTYC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

inside english

Vol. VII, No. 1 | Journal of the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges | September 1980

INSIDE *inside english*

ECCTYC Looks at Writing Across the Disciplines

Competence in writing can be achieved across the curriculum, says Mary Spangler, and she sets about to prove this contention in a program she has developed for workshops to assist teachers outside English to teach writing competence.
Page 4

Fluency, form, and control can be gained by students with basic skills deficiencies as Dorothy Bray and Helen Gordon discuss.
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Garrison method works as has been shown in a study of classrooms in LACCD using Garrison and non-Garrison approaches to teaching writing.
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Does the paper monster scare you?
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The English Councils of UC and CSUC support a reduction in community college composition teaching load.
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ECCTYC plans workshops in research and innovation for fall and spring.
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Outside English

By WAYNE WOLSKI
English Division Chair
Imperial Valley College

AFTER six year as a community college composition instructor, I am convinced that English departments are of themselves incapable of teaching students how to write. My realization came in a composition workshop held in February at Imperial Valley College. Unlike other writing workshops I've attended where the assumption is always here's-a-new-approach-to-enable-English-instructors-to-create-writers-from-dust-and-ashes, the basic premise of this gathering was that we in English cannot do it — the teaching of writing — alone; that if writing is to be successfully taught and acquired, then English departments need assistance from outside English.

The workshop leaders were Judy Hert, San Bernardino Valley College (no stranger to readers of *inside english*) and Dr. David Rankin, head of the writing programs at CSU-Dominguez Hills. The two are working with a community college component of a grant aimed at writing across the disciplines. They explained what makes writing tick, why it ordinarily is not ticking in our students, and why all faculty can and should employ writing in the classroom.

The dialogue they quickly generated from thirty-five Imperial Valley faculty soon made apparent the polarization that has existed for some time at our college: most non-English teachers have long since thrown in the blue book in favor of the clinically boxed and numbered answer sheet, leaving to the English department both the teaching and the assigning of written work.

You are probably familiar with the causes of this polarization. More than ever before, our community colleges are the watershed of the educational system. Through our open door policies, we embrace students of every linguistic persuasion. We in English have labored heroically to educate all of these. And now in 1980, the most forthright appraisal of our academic status in the two-year college may be the one given by Imperial Valley's dean of counseling at the workshop: "We are repair schools."

OUR PATCHES and gauze in English are labelled "remediation." But our first aid stations are too few, and like the medics on M*A*S*H we can't keep up with the caseload. Though we garner our students after a dozen years of prior education, we see little sign of writing competence. To compensate, we beef up our curriculum (eight composition courses at IVC, plus a writing lab) to provide the basics, but still our progress is insufficient. Like the plucky 4077, we could try irreverent humor to sustain ourselves in this linguistic combat zone.

But more likely our choices in the English department boil down to three: 1. We fortify our consciences by keeping up with the latest teaching techniques and proferring these to our students from three to five times per week in 50-minute doses; 2. We retreat from the ungrammatical, non-rhetorical din into the security of our one or two sections of Introduction to Literature, while putting on a galvanized demeanor in those composition course we are forced to instruct; 3. We get out of teaching, recognizing our task — the teaching of writing — as quite impossible.

Symptomatic of our dilemma is the wholesale blame for the shortcomings of our students we lay at other doors: parents, elementary and secondary teachers, administrators, and mistaken educational philosophies. But here in the community college it is too late for a PTA meeting, and blaming what we suspect are vagrant educators will gain us only enemies. We need allies.

HERT AND RANKIN suggest an alliance with our colleagues outside the English department. The wherewithal to explore and test this alliance ($350,000) comes from the National Endowment for the Humanities and is being administered for three years under the auspices of UC-San Bernardino. The basic premise of the project may serve us in English as a fourth and more palatable choice: to convince those faculty outside of English that writing instruction and practice are necessary and productive in their classrooms, and that in unison, community college faculties can make students better writers — and better learners as a result.

Marketing this idea to our colleagues outside English is a large portion of what the workshop entails, along with suggestions on how to introduce and sustain what Hert called the "writing act" among our students. Instead of ranting about how students can't write, Rankin challenged, all faculty members should ask themselves, "What am I doing to cause good writing?" The stock answer from faculty, of course, has been: "Why, we send them (students) to the English department." One of my colleagues once confided that in an essay test (the first he had given in some years) all but three students flunked. "But don't worry," he assured me, "I'm not giving up. I've sent all of them to the writing lab."

Developing writing skills is the responsibility of the entire faculty not just the English department, Rankin argued. But motivating other faculty to employ writing tasks in their classrooms is not to suggest they should become English teachers. The workshop, however, can provide some basics on how non-English teachers can introduce a writing component in their classrooms, build on it, and eventually get substantive written responses from students.

TO GET our faculty thinking about the possibilities of cross discipling writing instruction, the workshop identified our consensus that many students cannot write even two coherent sentences in tandem. We followed this by agreeing that writing is essential to learning. Other faculty don't need our background in composition theory to support this premise. As one history instructor told me: "I wrote plenty as an undergraduate; that's the way I learned the material." But neither he nor most of the rest of us on community college faculties today were

(Continued on Page 6)

Letters

HIRSCH DEFENDED

Dear Editor:

In the last edition of *i.e.* [June, 1980] Bert Woodruff of Fresno City College wrote a response to my review of E. D. Hirsch's book, *The Philosophy of Composition*, a book which Bert views as supporting dangerous trends in the teaching of writing, trends which emphasize error counting and accountability at the expense of creativity and diversity. Though I appreciated Bert's kind comments about me personally and his courtesy in sending me a copy of his letter, I do not, of course, agree with what he is saying. (I presume that this is what he expected and that he sent me a copy of his letter expecting some dialogue on these issues.)

One probable reason for Bert's criticism of Hirsch is his evident dependence on my review of Hirsch's book for an understanding of that author's ideas. But the truth of the matter is that Hirsch is relatively unconcerned with accountability (his chapter on that subject is the weakest and most speculative in the book) and error counting, at least, as ends in themselves. What does concern Hirsch is the way an understanding of the reading process — the way the mind recognizes, sorts, and stores meaning obtained from marks on a page — enables writers to gain control of their craft.

Bert's misunderstanding is due partly to the limits of my review. The fact is that I used Hirsch's term, "relative readability," knowing that it might be misunderstood, at least, until one read the Hirsch book itself. I thought the term and idea would make the reader curious. In fact, my over-riding goal in the writing of the reviews was to lure readers to Hirsch. This was also my reason for emphasizing the question of whether or not composition is a genuine discipline (besides the fact that Hirsch's ideas are exciting just because they suggest a responsible, intellectual basis for such a philosophy). I knew I could not summarize Hirsch's ideas in a short review, but I wanted to make the book seem what I am convinced it is — very important. Undoubtedly, I could have been clearer and more specific.

The reason I was trying to attract readers to Hirsch, the reason I think the book is so valuable, is that rather than take sides in the kind of controversy to which Bert's letter seems to refer — to the issues of diversity vs. standardization or authentic voice versus academic discourse — Hirsch's work makes that debate almost irrelevant. For, he puts all these questions and matters of taste and style in a new, useful, even objective framework: the relationship between the intention of the writer and the effect on the reader. Specifically, the best sentence in a given context is that version of the sentence which best conveys the *writer's intention* with the *least effort* to the reader. (What case can any writer make for difficulty which in no way adds to or changes the meaning or its effect on the reader?)

In fact, the above (my version of one of Hirsch's major points) is so obviously self evident that it would merely be another way of describing "good" writing, if it were not for recent research about the reading process itself, the way meaning is received, processed, and stored, and if it were not for the implication this research has for the craft of writing. After all, predicting and ensuring and improving readability is what a writer does every time he rereads or tests his own writing on himself as a reader. Recent research on reading simply puts that process on a more objective basis and thus, perhaps, makes it more teachable. This is, in part, what Hirsch's book is about.

The reason diversity vs. conformity is not an issue here is that for Hirsch readability is only measurable in terms of the writer's intention. Hirsch never completely separates content and form. After all, some very bad writing is error free, and writing with little content or almost total predictability is hardly readable at all (which is also Bert's point, I presume).

Hirsch was exciting to me as a composition teacher because I think we comp teachers have often used our personal and sometimes highly subjective style preference as a tool for bettering and even battering each other and our students to little purpose. In Hirsch's work I see the possibility that we could find a more objective and useful basis for our preferences and debates.

Most important to me, Hirsch provides another means of enabling students to gain control of skills that in turn enable them to make real choices. For, unless a writer has some degree of craft, unless a writer has the ability to choose and then to convey a given meaning and/or create a given effect, that writer has few choices and thus little chance at diversity. (Lack of craft may create diversity for readers but the effect is accidental from the writer's viewpoint. The jokes are not intentional and so are at the expense of the writer.)

Again, I have failed to do Hirsch credit. But I am grateful to Bert for providing the occasion to repeat my conviction of the significance of Hirsch's book.

Yours truly,
JUDITH R. HERT
San Bernardino Valley College

P.S. This discussion between Bert and me is a slightly less formal and sophisticated version of a debate which occurs in the first three articles of the April, 1980 issue of *College English*. In that discussion Mina Shaughnessy, rather than Hirsch, is the issue, but there is enough similarity to make those articles interesting to anyone curious about this question of the relationship of recent research in compostion to political and ideological values in the teaching of composition.

Dear Editor . . .

WRITING FOR ALL

Dear Editor:

As I read the several fine articles on writing problems in the June issue of *inside english*, I was struck by the fact that the approach so often recommended for improving writing is not bold enough. It is not true (or ought not to be) that writing is the concern *only* of English instructors! Surely, every course in which students are called upon to liberate themselves from preconceived ideas and to express their new-found insights (that is, liberal arts courses) does (and should) require writing — of essays, term papers, reports and so on. Is this not the case in political science, history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and economics? In literature, philosophy, art and music appreciation and humanities? Should it not also be the case, at least to a certain extent, in anatomy, astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, geology, science, physics, physiology, and zoology?

The primary weakness of the position that English instructors should be given special encouragement to teach writing is that it implies that the other liberal arts teachers shouldn't. Surely, English teachers do (and should) require *more* writing than other teachers. But what they require of their students is valuable to the latter *throughout* their college programs. Informed educators know that the curriculum is not (or should not be) so specialized or compartmentalized that writing skills can (or should) be taught in isolation. Indeed, good writing is an indispensable tool for learning and has intrinsic value, i.e., the pleasure it brings to human life.

Instead of concentrating on winning for English teachers the right to reduced loads for teaching writing, we should insist on writing in *all* liberal arts courses. When (or if) the faculties of community colleges come to appreciate the value of writing for a good education, perhaps they will come to appreciate much better than they do now the importance of reduced class

(Continued With More Letters on Page 3)

ENGLISH COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA TWO-YEAR COLLEGES
CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC
ECCTYC

inside english
The Journal of the
English Council of
California Two-Year Colleges

Barbara Bilson ..... Editor
Frances Kurilich .... Associate Editor

Contributing Editors
Barbara Bilson
"REviews"

James Cagnacci
"Sacramento Scene"

Advertising Editor
Frances Kurilich

inside english is published three times a year: September, December, March, and June.

i.e. welcomes writing of interest to instructors of English in California two-year colleges. Send submissions and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Barbara Bilson, Editor
inside english
Santa Monica College
1900 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(213) 450-5150, ext. 258

i.e. offers individual subscriptions at $5.00/year and commercial subscriptions at $20.00/year.

inside english is printed by Los Angeles Trade-Technical College Printing Department.

Notices

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH REGIONAL CONFERENCE
16-18 October 1980, Las Vegas, NV.
Write: NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TEACHERS OF ENGLISH FALL CONFERENCE
18 October 1980, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Music Center, Los Angeles.
Write: CATE, P. O. Box 4427, Whittier, CA 90607.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH ANNUAL CONVENTION
21-26 November 1980, Stouffer's Cincinnati Towers and Convention Center, Cincinnati, OH. Note that the convention dates are a week earlier than the traditional Thanksgiving week scheduled in the past.
Write: NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

ANNUAL CHANCELLOR'S CONFERENCE ON COMPOSITION
8 December 1980, Faculty Center, University of California, Los Angeles.
Write: Conference Director, Chancellor's Conference on Composition, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

inside english Deadlines

December 1980 issue
Friday, October 24, 1980

March 1981 issue
Friday, January 30, 1981

June 1981 issue
Friday, April 24, 1981

COMPOSITION TEACHING LOAD AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHER

Resolutions and Recommendations

University of California

We call attention to the following amended statement of the English Council of the University of California, in view of recent decisions to increase composition teaching loads in several California community college districts:

We are informed by the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges that the normal yearly load for Composition teachers in their institutions is eight to ten classes with as many as 300 students writing compositions totalling seven to ten thousand words. Noting that the comparable load in our own departments is six to seven classes with 120-130 students writing a comparable number of words, we offer the judgment that the community college load is far too heavy to permit adequate correction of papers and the individual attention to student writing necessary for genuinely effective composition teaching. The disparity of loads between the two levels is in fact so great as to cast doubt upon the actual equivalence of composition classes taught in the community colleges and transferred to the several university campuses for freshman English credit. We urge that composition loads in community colleges be adjusted so that there will be no future concern about equivalences and transfers.

California State University and Colleges

The following resolution was adopted unanimously by the English Council of California State University and Colleges, 25 April 1980:

WHEREAS increases in student demand for English composition courses and programs, at a time of steady state staffing and threat of lay-off, might threaten academic standards by such means as (a) increasing student load for composition teachers beyond reasonable and professional levels, and (b) staffing composition programs with those not fully qualified to teach them; and

WHEREAS composition instruction is unusually demanding of instructional time, since weekly paper-grading and student conferences are normal procedure; and

WHEREAS excessive composition workload at some community colleges has caused the University of California English Council to question the transfer quality of some composition courses;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the CSUC English Council establish a standing committee on composition course workloads and staffing to report to the Council at least once a year on the maintenance of proper standards for CSUC English composition instruction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT we endorse the ECCTYC resolution on composition teaching load.

California Two-Year Colleges

The following resolution was adopted unanimously by ECCTYC, 25 April 1980:

WHEREAS there is continued emphasis on national and statewide levels that critical reading and writing are indeed the basis for all collegiate work; and

WHEREAS there exists increasing concern over the continued decline in students' writing abilities; and

WHEREAS a composition student must write at least once a week and a composition instructor must read, comment on, and correct at least one writing per student per week;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT ECCTYC reaffirms the necessity of adequate differential for each composition course, whether that differential be in the form of reduced unit load, reduced numbers of students, or increased contact hours per course.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT community college districts take heed of the spring 1979 University of California Council Resolution which clearly defines the relationship between excessive composition teaching loads and the quality of that teaching.

THE CHILDREN

The majolica teapot empties a rush
of paper scraps into my lap
The hand is mine —
but not the voice.

Those were the years
I spent with people not yet three feet high
I listened to their babble
Their talk flowed a sunny stream
Their thoughts were amber pebbles
under the clear flow
Anything reflected in that bright surface
was a *thing*
They babbled and I scribbled
Their poems stuffed the teapot full

Out there in the real world now
they talk like this:
The development of warm, outgoing, compassionate human beings is actualized by non-structured, other-oriented therapy.
And this:
The shortfall of annualized profit-objectified budgetization is accommodated by maximized credit-lines, economywise, hopefully.

They are successes there
Where tea is what's in teapots

NANCY KING
East Los Angeles College

Letters

(Continued from Page 2)

loads or maximum class sizes for English teachers to do their work well.

In fine, let us adopt a strategy that seeks to attain what is right and proper for the whole academic program and, in so doing, educate our colleagues about the value of writing. Then perhaps we can work out an arrangement fair to English teachers *and* valuable for our students.

Sincerely,
RICHARD H. REEB, JR.
Assistant Dean, Academic
Barstow College

ECCTYC AND YOU

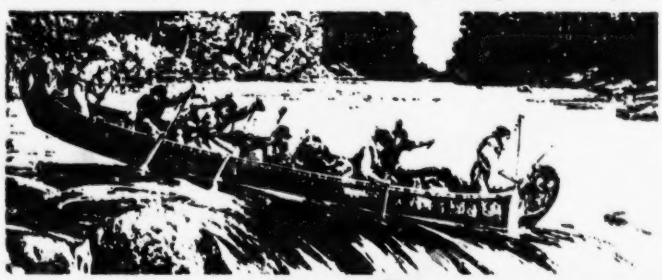
Dear Editor:

I hope that this letter gets read mainly by teachers who are still unfamiliar with ECCTYC and its goals and functions. As an Area Director for this Council for the last five years or so, I've noted pleasurably our growing stature as we have become more recognized by and articulate with Councils of the four-year schools and such influential committees as the California Post-Secondary Education Commission. I have enjoyed and appreciated my association with the stimulating leaders/teachers who make up the Board of Directors; among these, I'd especially laud Don Snepp and Gertrude Pujii, as president, such durable (and attractive) Area Directors as Marlene Griffith and Julie Hatoff, and, of course Barbara Bilson, who does such an excellent job on our journal.

During those five years, as ECCTYC was growing out of the infant stage, coming to that recognition as a legitimate organization which represents all of the English instructors in California's two-year colleges, I have heard several times, from various sources, though none so vituperative as one of our colleagues at Diablo Valley College, that this Council does not function democratically, does not represent the English teachers of the CC's but is an autocratic outfit run by Chairs, most of whom are "Management" oriented. I resent that accusation. The Board of Directors — made up of President, Immediate past-President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor(s) of *i.e.*, and twenty regional directors (two per each of ten geographical regions in the state) — is not dominated by Chairs. The fact is that of those twenty-five, only a small minority are presently Chairs of their departments. My further resentment comes from the fact that in our area (V: Bakersfield, College of the Sequoias, Fresno, Porterville, Reedley, Taft, and West Hills), I was the only active director for three years, scrambling and trying to get another until last year when Bert Woodruff (Fresno) accepted the position and added his considerable talents to the representation of our area. There is not a director on the Board who feels that he/she has a permanent residence there. The positions in each area are up for election every two years. The incumbents usually have run again because there were not others who would put their names in nomination.

I encourage all of you to find out more about this, your most immediately representative organization in California, and to get involved by attending yearly regional conferences, by submitting ideas and problems to your directors, and by reading, responding to and writing for *inside english*. And, if you are really serious about your criticism that the Council does not represent you, get yourself on the ballot the next time there is an election of directors in your area.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM DECKER
College of the Sequoias



A PROGRAM THAT WORKS

Writing Competence Across the Curriculum

By MARY SPANGLER
Los Angeles Valley College

The present decline in student literacy is a widely acknowledged and frequently discussed crisis in higher education. To counteract this growing problem, English teachers have responded by assigning more writing, originating developmental writing programs, and experimenting with individualized teaching techniques. However, while we are reading and evaluating our students' writing, many teachers in disciplines outside English have responded in a more pragmatic way. They are turning increasingly to objective

tests as an exclusive method of evaluating their students. The fundamental problem with this approach is that greater reliance on "multiple-guess" exams further encourages the decline in literacy by depriving students of a major opportunity to synthesize and shape information. That is, unless a student can express his thoughts and ideas in his own words on paper, he may not know what he knows. More significantly, he may not experience that "transfer of knowledge" which educator Paul Dressel in *Handbook of Academic Evaluation* identifies as the function of education.

In the last few years efforts have been made to confront this decline in literacy. Some postsecondary institutions have developed course-related, student-oriented writing programs. Other institutions have approached the problem through staff development. Most of these programs have attempted to improve student writing directly and departmentally. No doubt these efforts are meeting with varying degrees of success. However, the magnitude of the literacy problem suggests that what is needed is an array of alternatives which will confront the issue on a number of levels simultaneously.

The program I am presently developing is a unique approach that has met with success and that has significant possibilities for wider application. It is an integrative, cross-disciplinary approach to student literacy whose objective is to assist instructors in disciplines outside English in assigning and evaluating written work in their courses. It is a concrete illustration of how writing proficiency can be a part of all disciplines rather than be confined to English instruction alone. Its distinctive features are that it is practical, economical, and successful.

My project, "Toward Writing Competence in Academic Disciplines," is funded by the California Community College Chancellor's Fund for Instructional Improvement for 1979-1980. Its objective has been to develop an eight-hour pilot workshop to assist teachers outside English in raising student literacy by requiring writing competency from their students. To achieve that goal, in September I recruited seven instructors from the Los Angeles Valley College faculty to work with me in pooling our expertise and identifying our individual needs and problems. That this invitation attracted teachers from theatre arts, sociology, speech, life science-biology, history, humanities, and health science is significant in showing the wide appeal of such an idea. We met informally a few times during the fall semester to discuss frustrations, gather student samples, and develop a common perspective. During that time I gathered, developed, and organized classroom-tested materials from my fifteen years of teaching writing. It is worth mentioning that, unlike other approaches I have investigated, the materials gave rise to the workshop rather than the workshop serving as a catalyst for the materials. According to Shannon Stack, professor of history, "I have attended a number of conferences on writing for other disciplines and never before did they offer any useful, concrete advice or teaching techniques. These were admirably handled in the course of this writing project."

On four consecutive Mondays in March, the eight of us met for eight hours to participate in the workshop that I had conceived and developed. The concrete result of my efforts is a 125-page manual of techniques and materials to assist the instructor. A few of the workshop's topics include "Toward Writing Competence," "The Writing Process," "Formulating the Question and Evaluating the Answer."

The seven teachers are now formally assessing their attitudes about the workshop's effectiveness. They are also developing and using materials in their classes based on the workshop's guidelines and recommendations. I will prepare a formal evaluation in the near future. At the moment, however, all the members are positive in their reactions. According to Roy Havenhill, instructor in biological science, the workshop "... enabled us, for the first time, to communicate our common problem and diverse solutions with each other .... We, who had always felt that English composition was something that should not be taught solely within the confines of the English composition class, were at last being supported by a member of the English teaching staff itself in a very concrete fashion." Pat Allen, chairperson of the sociology department, says that she "came out of the seminar with a newer sense of the importance of teaching writing. Conferring with other instructors who basically agreed on this premise was most valuable for those of us in an atmosphere of scantron-marked, multiple-choice grading systems." Without exception the participants feel that such a program should be more readily available to more teachers. They are now committed to the need for competence in writing as an avenue to literacy and have some aids to make that exposure meaningful and attainable. Clearly this is the type of program which could easily be used by community colleges throughout the state.

A program such as this which has met with concrete success is significant because of the practical, functional way it approaches the problem of student literacy. While information contained in this workshop is available from numerous diverse sources, it is not easily accessible in a coherent form to faculty outside English. Most instructors in other disciplines are so absorbed with the responsibilities of their courses or lack the expertise in assigning and evaluating written work that they are content to leave the teaching of writing to the English department. Instead they rely heavily on objective testing as the sole measure of student evaluation. But as evidenced by teacher response to my workshop, many of these same instructors would be willing to incorporate written assignments into their curricula if they could have time-saving, economical, effective devices to help them. They recognize that the ability to write coherently is an essential characteristic of an educated individual. Lou Albert, instructor in health education, best illustrates this attitude in saying, "Working with faculty members of various disciplines on campus created an environment of understanding and appreciation of the importance of the inter-related effort by all of us in education working toward the learning process."

To conclude, rather than individual teachers and departments separately confronting the issue of literacy and failing to experience measurable cross-disciplinary consequences, articulation between English departments and other subject fields is essential. Rather than making instructors in other disciplines surrogate English teachers, this workshop is an opportunity to encourage the transfer of resources from one department to another so that the resulting articulation carries further to the students who are, in actuality, the prime beneficiaries. They are the ones who must be reached. As they begin to realize that departments expect and demand related or identical requirements with reference to literacy, they will have taken that first major step toward integrating and transferring their knowledge across the curriculum.

Some New Faces — And One That Couldn't Stay Away

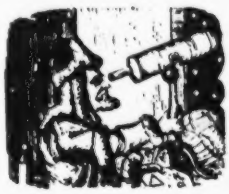
Even though she wrote a lovely letter to all of us, saying goodbye to the ECCTYC Board of Directors, Julie Hatoff of Mira Costa just couldn't stay away — or, maybe, she just couldn't resist Jim Cagnacci's persuasive charms. In any case, Julie is back on the Board of Directors as Historian, and ECCTYC is the richer for her continued active involvement.

☆ ☆ ☆

The ECCTYC Board

Several new faces will be seen at ECCTYC meetings as several new Regional Directors have been elected: John Lovas, DeAnza College (Region III); Mary Ann Keller, San Joaquin Delta College (Region IV); Janis Rank, Porterville College (Region V); James Mitchell, San Bernardino Valley College (Region IX); and Elaine McLevie, Grossmont College (Region X). In addition, as Jim Cagnacci, ECCTYC's new president, announces in his President's Message [page 7], several former Board members will be serving in new capacities.

As Bill Decker, ECCTYC's new secretary, points out in his letter [page 2], ECCTYC is an organization OF English teachers, FOR English teachers, but it can only be as broadly based as those who participate in it — serving on its board, attending its conferences, writing for its journal.



PILOT COURSE IN BASIC SKILLS

Developing Fluency, Form, and Control

By HELEN GORDON
Coordinator, Bakersfield College Learning Center and
DOROTHY BRAY
Assistant Dean, Languages and Literature, Sacramento City College

How to teach writing to the increasing numbers of students with basic skills deficiencies is now a central concern for every institution of higher education. The past practice of providing many courses for the various levels of student writing has led to a proliferation of writing courses. This search for homogeneity in college remedial writing classes has proven to be a futile one, leading to ever-increasing fragmentation, logistical problems, and teacher frustration. A more realistic process has been developed and a pilot course successfully completed at Sacramento City College in Sacramento, California. This process has proved flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of student ability, simple enough for students to follow easily, and effective in both reducing mechanical errors and increasing fluency.

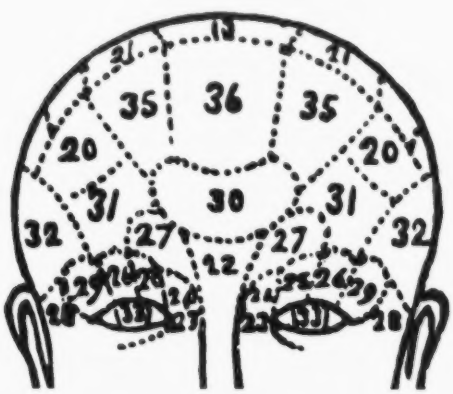
Right/Left Brain

Teachers of the pilot course — Dorothy Bray, Nancy McGrath, and Helen Gordon — believed that skills-deficient students might benefit from methods built upon concepts drawn from brain hemisphericity and developmental psychology. Studies of left-brain and right-brain specialization led them to seek ways of tapping the right-brain abilities (images, holistic patterns, creativity, rhythms) as well as those attributed to the left brain (sequencing, details, analysis, logic). They theorized that many non-traditional students lack the analytical skills required by traditional grammar (left-brained), but could learn through the imitation of whole patterns and creative associations (right-brained). They further believed that actual writing practice requires coordination of both hemispheres and, with the help of frequent feedback, would result in greater improvement than drills on isolated components of composition. From developmental theory, these instructors drew the concept that skills are best learned in sequential movement from simple to complex. They felt that the traditional sequence from sentence to paragraph to essay does not really move from simpler to more complex structures, and a new approach was needed.

Three Tasks

Within this framework, Bray, McGrath, and Gordon narrowed their instructional focus to a simple sequence of three tasks to be completed by each student in every class period. The tasks were so structured that the student could complete each task daily and receive feedback on each task, both important factors in helping students feel successful. The feedback was oral with interaction between instructors and students. Task I, free writing, served to develop fluency. For ten minutes of each class period students could write on any subject they chose, with the goal of filling a full page. Suggested topics were provided if students asked for them. Task II, writing a single sentence from stimulus words, served to generate ideas, to encourage creativity, and to tap associations of words and experiences in the students' memories. A list of stimulus words was provided; the student chose a word and built a cluster of associations in a trial web around it. Then he selected several of the associated words and incorporated them into an original sentence. Some striking metaphors resulted, verifying that the right brain abilities could contribute to the writing process.

Task III, imitative writing, served to increase the students' repertoire of skills and awareness of conventions in standard English. This task employed a series of controlled compositions designed by Helen Gordon. Beginning with the skill of proofreading, the thirty lessons moved through increasingly difficult skills such as handling pronouns, tenses, levels of usage, direct and indirect quotations, verb variety, and the writing of business letters and letters of application. Provided with correct models of writing rather than models with errors, the students, for each lesson, copied a passage of about 200 words, changing it to control for one skill such as present to past tense, singular to plural, etc. In content, the passages related to such practical interests as applying for a job, understanding oneself and others, attitudes needed for success, and study skills. They were graded for correctness with a key, and re-written if the student made more than three errors.



Accountability

Another element of the course involved holding students accountable for their practice. As students completed each of the three tasks, the instructor or a tutor initialed a check sheet in the student's individual folder. Folders were kept in a portable file in the college writing lab and taken to the class when it met. Tasks I and II had to be completed in class daily. Task III could be completed outside of class, but on a controlled schedule so that students completed a lesson and received feedback before proceeding to the next lesson. Students were to complete at least two controlled compositions per week, thus permitting the steady development of the missing skills, rather than hurriedly completing a lump of assignments. The controlled compositions were printed in a syllabus which the students purchased. This syllabus soon will be published as a textbook by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, tentatively titled *From Copying to Creating*.

Feedback on the free writing and original sentences gradually increased over the semester. At first no corrections were made; students were rewarded just for completing a sentence and at least half a page of free writing. Later they were told when they had made mechanical errors and asked to revise on the spot. This feedback during the writing process personalized the tasks for the students and increased rapport between students, tutors, and instructors.

Promising Results

Research on the pilot course compared the students' improvement to that of a matched group of students in traditional sentence structure courses. Between pre-test and post-test compositions, students in the pilot courses reduced errors by 43 per cent and increased fluency by 17 per cent (that is 17 per cent more words written in a 50-minute period). In contrast, the matched group studying sentence structure reduced errors by only 15 per cent and actually decreased in fluency by 10 per cent. Students in the two groups ranged from some learning disabled students to some who qualified for transfer level courses; students of all ability levels improved more in the pilot course.

The results of the pilot course were influential in a decision by the English Department to re-structure their curriculum in composition. Mini-courses in components of composition such as spelling, vocabulary, and sentence structure, are being replaced by a sequential series of courses with entry-level and exit-level skills established by department committees. Students whose entrance examination scores fall in the lowest third will be placed in courses using the holistic methods here described. The middle third will go into courses requiring more refined skills, and the top third into English 1A (college writing). At every level students will be encouraged to build vocabulary, spell their own vocabulary accurately, and continue to reduce their errors, improve their fluency, and refine their writing style.

Additional information may be obtained by writing to Dr. Dorothy Bray, Dean of Languages and Literature, Sacramento City College, Sacramento, CA, 95822.

Sociological

The wild men have motorcycles,
the hatred of police
and gasoline in their veins.
They were not raised
by wolves. Mother
loved Tokay and Father
a fat-barreled gun.
The open graves
in the front yard
slowed down the grocer and cop,
the paper-filled hands.
Out back
the kid, who saw everything,
ratcheted the last bolts tight
and everyone's main drag.
Mom and Dad thought
they heard something explode
and laughed.
They never imagined the wind
could stretch his hair
till it wound in the spokes.
It was hard to imagine
him out of control, doing nothing
about twenty tons of truck,
its chrome-plated horns playing
the only music he ever heard.

RICHARD LINDER
Orange Coast College

ECCTYC CONFERENCES

ECCTYC is sponsoring a one-day workshop in research and writing for selected community college English teachers in Southern California at Cypress College on Friday, October 17, from 10:00 to 3:00 p.m. A similiar workshop will be held in Northern California at DeAnza College on a Friday in March.

The purpose of the workshops is to provide community college English teachers interested in developing and writing about ideas related to their teaching with the opportunity to share their concerns and projects and to gather information and responses from each other. The workshop will consist entirely of mini-presentations by the participants along with questions and discussions generated by the presentations. The work presented will be largely in process as compared to completed work and may even be in the form of questions.

As well as providing support, information, and a sounding board for the participants, the workshops will serve as an additional regular source of material for *inside english*. Barbara Bilson, the *i.e.* editor, will be involved at both workshops, and participants will be encouraged to work, as teams or individuals, on writing projects of their choice for future issues of *i.e.*

Because the workshop is experimental and involves maximum priticipation by those attending, the number of instructors involved will be only about twenty to thirty. Participants will be invited at the suggestion of ECCTYC Regional Directors and English Department Chairs.

Judith Hert of San Bernardino Valley College, Chair of the ECCTYC Committee on Research, is overseeing these workshops with the aide of Barbara Bilson. Richard McIntosh of Cypress College is hosting the Southern California workshop and John Lovas of DeAnza College is providing the same service in Northern California.

For additional information on these workshops contact your Regional Directors, Judith Hert at SBVC, or Barbara Bilson at Santa Monica City College.

Outside English

(Continued from Page 1)

taught much writing as undergraduates. We knew how to write before we had our high school diploma in hand.

If writing is basic to learning, then the attitude that the English department alone should teach and sustain this skill is both untenable and inequitable. And the insufficiency of writing instruction in our community colleges becomes all the more blatant when our colleagues not only don't teach writing but fail to require it or give out superficial writing assignments: "Do a 500-word book report." "Discuss the causes of the Civil War." Many of my colleagues insist that no writing is assigned because students are incapable of writing, and, they say, if they insist on writing projects, students disappear to other instructors who have no writing component. This erosion of the writing act leaves the English department in a vacuum — writing becomes synonymous with our classes and ours alone.

INSTRUCTORS may be just as reluctant to assign writing as students are reticient to perform it. This reluctance often proceeds from not knowing how to cope with a writing component. The workshop breaks writing down into its process and presents this process as something manageable in every classroom from economics to auto mechanics.

With a good deal of vitality, Mrs. Hert profiled typical community college students:

—They have been able to avoid writing for a very long time.
—They did not progress from simple writing tasks.
—They often never had writing tasks.
—They can't think in a writing assignment because they are too afraid of making mistakes.
—Each student thinks all the other students write solid prose.
—They do not know the writing process.

Rankin added that many non-English teaching instructors don't know the process either and, thereby, compound the problem. With a good deal of wit, he nonetheless gave some brutally honest descriptions of faculty:

—Teachers are often not equipped to teach people to learn to write and that is what is increasingly needed at community colleges.
—We are lazy and lack the discipline to ask the good essay question. (He recollected a college philosophy instructor whose final exam question was: "Why?")
—We assume students know how to write and when we find they can't we're not sufficiently interested in helping them learn. We go off in a huff and sulk.

Both Rankin and Hert reviewed some basic principles of the writing process that gave us all greater respect for the complexities of this skill:

—Writing is a matter of acquiring, storing, retrieving information and then expressing it. It is an enormous complication tied up with many things.
—Writing is attempting to make words behave on a page.
—If writing is not practiced, it does not work anymore.

Some of their advice to all instructors included the following:

—Make writing a day-to-day habit in your classroom.
—We (teachers) must understand the writing process; intervene in it as our students practice it, helping them (especially early on) to solve some of their inability to express.
—Complacency about student writing skills will leave us with primarily fearful, confused, and failing students.
—Start students out with unassuming writing tasks rather than the "college level" essay question. They provided a sequence of such tasks to key students into:

- copying
- journal writing
- notetaking
- one to three sentence responses to questions
- summarizing paragraphs from a text
- comparison-contrast
- evaluative writing

—Cut back on your unrealistic expectations. Meet students where they are.
—Don't give up.

The purpose is not to convince your colleagues that, by god, they had better straighten up and start teaching nouns, verbs, and commas like the rest of us over in English. Rather it is to win them over to using basic, non-technical writing tasks, to generate substantive written responses, and not to see red (or write it) when they encounter "there" for "their" and faulty verb agreement. (Alas, the grammar and spelling errors will probably always be English departments' business.) The workshop, then, can provide our non-English teaching colleagues the wherewithal to teach writing right in there with frog anatomy or the data on Pavlov's dogs.

Our dividend, if we manage to sell writing to the rest of the faculty, is that acquiring this skill will be basic to students' survival on campus. Students won't be able to evade the composition class because there will be some writing required in all classrooms. And when in our English classrooms we insist that writing is a necessary skill, we may get a few less skeptics. Most importantly, with the perpetuation of writing campus-wide, more learning will accrue to students.

The workshop alone will not, however, accomplish this unity of purpose. Preparation is necessary to attract enough of your faculty to the workshop for this element to make a difference across campus. First, I recommend you enlist the support of the English faculty. Without them as a nucleus, there can be little hope of success with the project. Have them infiltrate the rest of the faculty, encouraging those otuside English to attend the workshop. You'll also benefit from the active support of the head of the instruction area, the leaders of the academic senate, and department chairmen. Plan the workshop over a two-day, eight-to-ten hour period. Ours was much too short with just four and a half hours in one day. You might consider scheduling it during those in-service days we all endure each year.

For the workshop itself, I encourage a segment of actual writing take place to remind instructors of what Rankin characterized as "the terror of staring at a blank page that our students face." The workshop should also include small work groups composed of instructors from various departments each assisted by one or two English faculty. Their purpose is to create writing tasks that could be used in each discipline. Afterwards, these work groups should meet regularly to review progress and pitfalls. Conduct another workshop, if your budget permits, several months later. According to Hert, English faculty, once they go through the workshops (and considering their prior expertise in writing) make good workshop leaders, and money from the NEH grant may be available to your school.

As this project progresses and gains momentum, as I hope it will, we in English might lobby for a course or two at our universities designed to more comprehensively train non-English faculty in how to use writing in their classrooms. The presumption throughout this, of course, has been that there are enough of us on community college faculties who are alarmed at the demise of good writing skills in our students and that we are willing to learn a new trick or two and do a bit of proselytizing to make it work. As one history teacher said to me recently, "Maybe it's time we all get into this business of writing."

The Experiment That Worked

In an experimental project involving four colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), writing classes using the one-to-one method of teaching composition showed significantly greater gains than did control groups taught by non-Garrison methods.

Statistical analysis of the experiment was published in April in a report by project director Jo An McGuire Simmons of the English faculty of Los Angeles City College. Besides impressive gains made by "Garrison-taught" students, the Simmons report shows that remedial classes gained significantly more than the freshman English classes, the latter being heavily laden with tasks in logic, semantics, library research, and critical reading, all in addition to writing. There was no significant difference among colleges in gain scores. This means that "the Garrison method works as well on campuses with lower-income, high minority populations as on the campus with the higher-income, low minority population." Retention was greater in Garrison classes than in the non-Garrison control classes, and

teacher morale was greatly increased.

The purpose of the project was to determine the local effectiveness of techniques enunciated by Roger Garrison and currently used or adapted for use on various campuses throughout the nation.

Begun in 1977, the project proceeded in three phases: the training of faculty in a series of workshops conducted by Roger Garrison, the practicing of Garrison's method by faculty in the four colleges for a semester, and finally the measuring of the second semester of "Garrison" taught classes matched at that time with "non-Garrison" control classes.

Project classes represented both remedial and college-level courses. Measurement included pretesting and post-testing of all students alike by in-class essays on an assigned question. All pretest and post-test essays, bearing only coded numerals for identification, were at the end mixed together and blind-graded holistically by a group of teachers specially trained by Dr. Edward White, Coordinator of English Testing Programs for California State Universities and Colleges.

To facilitate the "one-to-one" tutorial instruction essential to Garrison's technique, the LACCD modified his method by providing classroom teaching aides for each instructor. For, as Simmons reports, "The heart of the method is the student-teacher conference which enables the instructor to teach with the greatest impact — one-to-one, giving individualized, step-by-step guidance" in class during composition.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Looking Ahead

With considerable reluctance, I begin this first column as current president of ECCTYC. Knowing I can never achieve the polished writing or the depth of insight of my two predecessors in this office, Gertrude Fujii and Don Snepp, I cringe at subjecting you to my stilted Victorian prose. However, I have no choice but to submit a column to our journal; you, at least, have the choice not to read these sketchy remarks.

Let me begin by thanking the ECCTYC Board of Directors for electing me to the office of President. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve you, knowing well that I can only succeed in this endeavor by relying on your continued advice, assistance, and support. Being very conscious of my own inadequacies and shortcomings, I am especially cheered by the slate of officers who will be serving with me; they bring a wealth of experience and creativity to their assignments. The officers are Judy Hert — Vice President (San Bernardino Valley College), Bill Decker — Secretary (College of the Sequoias), John Coates — Acting Treasurer (Orange Coast College), Julie Hatoff — Historian (Mira Costa College) and Gertrude Fujii — Immediate Past President (Los Angeles Valley College). A special word of thanks should go to Pat Barney (Citrus College), Jack Gill (College of San Mateo), and Don Snepp (City College of San Francisco) who, after completing many years of service to ECCTYC, ended their tenure on the Executive Committee as of June 30, 1980; we are all greatly indebted to them. Bear with me for one last kudo before I am forced to develop some topic for this column. I want to single out Barbara Bilson, editor of *inside english*, for special praise. It is she, not the members of the Executive Committee, who singlehandedly holds this organization together. This journal allows us to communicate with one another, to focus on the issues facing our discipline, to develop and present our stands on those issues, and to present a united front in our battle to maintain quality education.

As most of you are well aware, this organization has historically been a state group with membership limited to professional educators associated with the discipline of English at the two-year college. As one part of California's tripartite system of collegiate education, we maintain close affiliation with the English Councils of the two other segments of higher education in this state: the English Council of the University of California, and the English Council of California State Universities and Colleges. Because of its strong leadership in the years since its inception, ECCTYC has become recognized by our State Legislature, our State Board of Governors, CPEC, ASCCC, NEH, our State Chancellor's Office, DOE, and many other state and federal educational agencies as *the* representative of the two-year college English discipline within California. We intend to maintain, foster, and indeed broaden and deepen this sphere of influence. However, we continue to view ourselves as neither an alternative nor a threat to such national professional organizations for English instructors as MLA, NCTE, or CCCC; or to such regional organizations as PCRC, CATE, or CCTE. We make no effort to compete with such organizations; rather we continue to seek ways better to support their activities and to assist them in their endeavors, to the degree that those activities and endeavors affect two-year college English instruction within this state, our only arena of activity.

Those of you who received the June issue of *inside english* realize that the single most important issue ECCTYC confronted last year was the attempt to erode special load/differential considerations for composition instructors. Problems arose in a number of districts — for example, the San Mateo Community College District and the Santa Barbara Community College District — but Peralta Community College District, because of its unique callousness and vindictiveness, became the focal point of the struggle. Not only ECCTYC but also the UC and CSU&C English Councils considered the issues involved and developed resolutions concerning the load factor in scheduling English composition courses. Most of you saw ECCTYC's statement in our June issue; if you would like to see copies of the statements passed by the other two councils, you can receive copies of them by contacting your district directors or any of ECCTYC's officers. [See page 3]

The Peralta problem may well initiate a period of intense pressure on English Departments. In this age of financial retrenchment and budget paring, district administrations are more concerned with balance sheets than with quality programs. Since composition loads are lower than those in other academic disciplines, composition programs are exceptionally vulnerable when districts refuse to consider anything but cost. English instructors in the Monterey Peninsula District should be especially prepared to monitor bargaining sessions in their area since Mr. Tadlock, former superintendent of Peralta District, is now their superintendent. English instructors throughout the state are advised to see that their campus and district administrations, their governing boards, and their bargaining units are informed of the load/differential resolutions of ECCTYC and of the UC and CSU&C English Councils. Individuals must accept the responsibility for notifying the appropriate individuals within their own district; ECCTYC could not possibly develop an accurate list of contacts within each district, nor could it afford the clerical/mailing costs involved.

We enter the 1980-81 academic year prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to safeguard the quality of our English programs and to improve the conditions under which we labor. ECCTYC's past efforts have met with considerable success; we intend to continue that tradition.

JIM CAGNACCI
City College of San Francisco

$ACRAMENTO $CENE

Funding and the Future

By TERRY MARRE
Santa Monica College and
JIM CAGNACCI
City College of San Francisco

At this writing the California legislature has not as yet passed on the 1980-81 state budget to Governor Brown for his approval. Fortunately, community college funding is not an issue this year. As you probably recall, for a second year community colleges are scheduled to be financed under AB 8, which provides, however, only a 7 per cent inflation adjustment for 1980-81. Community college spokesmen, therefore, initiated a two-pronged effort to increase that inflation adjustment to 9 per cent. First, they lobbied AB 2628 (Moore) through both houses at the end of June; this bill is the legislative vehicle for the 2 per cent increase. At the same time they worked to include the 2 per cent in the budget. As of mid July, the only threat to that increase was the Governor's blue pencil.

How does the inflation factor translate into hard cash for community college districts? According to the Analytical Studies Unit of the Chancellor's Office of California Community Colleges, the 7 per cent inflation adjustment means an additional $115 million for us next year. The 2 per cent increase will generate an additional $24-25 million and raise total revenue for community colleges in 1980-81 by about $140 million. This is an average increase for each district of 11.6 per cent as compared with 1979-80, when changes in ADA are taken into consideration. That ADA factor, among others, insures that all community college districts do not increase their revenues at the same rate; in fact, the percentage change between the past fiscal year and the coming one is wide: from as little as 1 per cent (Compton and Chaffee) to as much as 25.4 per cent (Saddleback).

All of the foregoing, remember, assumes that AB 8 remains otherwise unchanged, except for the 7 per cent or 9 per cent inflation factor increase next year.

Although our community college spokesmen in Sacramento are to be congratulated for their timely efforts, we should also keep in mind (yes, here comes the bad news) that community college budgets are about 15 per cent less than they would have been if Proposition 13 had not passed.

Worse still, if we look beyond 1980-81, the picture is bleak indeed. A recent two-day conference in Sacramento, sponsored by the California Tax Reform Association, focused on California's fiscal future. Most of the speakers and panelists — people like Assemblyman John Vasconcellos, Department of Finance Director Mary Ann Graves, Senator Albert Rodda, Assemblyman Leo McCarthy, pollster Mervyn Field, and former legislative analyst A. Alan Post — were very pessimistic. In general they not only saw no new sources of revenue, they even mentioned several bills still alive in both houses that would in effect cut revenues even further. AB 2001 (Bergeson) would permanently index state income taxes, at an estimated cost of $2 billion by the end of 1981. AB 2092 (Deddeh) would cut inheritance taxes by a third, another $200 million. Other bills take dead aim at the sales tax, the property tax, and renters' tax credits to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars of lost revenue. That these are worthy bills causes a dilemma for our legislators. The state has been deficit-spending for the last two years and will continue through 1980-81, at which time everyone seems to predict that the state surplus will run out. Since cuts in expenditures will have to come eventually, further reductions in revenue only exacerbate the problem.

In addition, the state hasn't had to face up to the implications of Gann as yet, for no legislation has been passed to translate Gann into statute. Assemblyman Vasconcellos said recently that the 1980-81 budget would be at the current Gann limit. The mandatory inflation factors built into several of the budget programs will inexorably push against that limit — a fiscal situation that bodes ill for the future. If significant cuts must be made in the 1981-82 budget, the most vulnerable areas are, as we know, education, Medi-Cal, and welfare.

So, although the state in general and the community college system in particular will be all right next year, projected 1981-82 revenues will not be able to support current spending levels, even if the tideland oil revenues are thrown in the pot. Knowledgeable people like Assemblyman McCarthy believe it to be politically impossible to raise taxes in the near future, and new appropriations in any case will be strait-jacketed by Gann.

This is what the observers who are supposed to know about these arcane matters are saying now. The only comfort we can take is to recall their track record as prophets of California's economic future. The murky crystal balls they use have furnished inaccurately optimistic messages in the past; perhaps the more pessimistic ones currently being transmitted will be off the mark too.

"An even more thorny problem"

Though we are all grateful that Proposition 9 was defeated last June, we recognize that the financial constraints created by the earlier Proposition 13 are still with us. As seen from the discussion above, one of the greater problems we now face is the shift of our financial base from local sources to the state government. We must remember "the golden rule: he who provides the gold rules." The legislature has already begun the process of examining how we are spending state money, and we can expect that scrutiny to become intensified in the months ahead.

One area already under attack is the basic skills program in community colleges. Some legislators are shouting loud and clear about what they consider the "ridiculousness of providing elementary education to adults at the college level." After abortive efforts to formulate a consensus definition of basic skills, a compromise is being struck that would deny issuing credit for courses that are below the level of "what is traditionally accepted as collegiate work." *(Continued on Page 8)*

When the Paper Monster Chews a Hole in Your Future

By FRANCINE L. DeFRANCE
Cerritos College

It finally happened. Last night I had a nightmare about the paper monster. I don't usually feel that he's haunting my subconscious, but now I cannot ignore the immense state he's in. When I do think of him, he's something of a cross between Sesame Street's lovable fracturer of the English language, the Cookie Monster, and the Phantom of the Opera, silent and deadly. Right now he's not quite a foot tall, has four arms (no legs, of course), and is spread out on my desk except for one small uncovered area about the size of this paper into which I squeeze my daily round of composition correction.

The shape he's in is not at all his fault. When school opens in the fall and I unlock my office for the first time, he usually has his first faint layer of skin. This consists of a few deadline reminders, instructions to follow the first week of class, the school catalogue, miscellaneous notes of encouragement from the President, the labor organizations, etc. I instinctively remove one of these sheets, stack it on another, and so create the clean space mentioned above.

Next, I go through the daily ritual of stopping at my mailbox which has been accumulating papers all summer. Struggling back to my office with armloads of invitations, notifications, salutations, solicitations, congratulations, and numerous book samples, I naturally unload each arm and carefully place each item on the growing appendages of my awaiting paper monster. From here it is easy to imagine his evolutionary development from September to June.

Now, as the semester hurriedly draws to an end, the Paper Monster has grown to his current outrageous proportions. It's not that I, the owner of this ogre, ever wanted to see him get so out of shape. At 35, I'm in pretty good health, can do a decent jog without getting winded, and am devoted to fruits, vegetables, and fiber, of course. But, sadly, my monster is underworked and flabby from all the carbohydrated polysaturated fatty letter paper he's been allowed to consume over this long year.

"Trim the beast"

It's not his size, though, that preys on my mind; I know why I dreamed about him. Mixed into the compost of these months are the forms for my fall schedule request, my contract for next year, and my membership card to the travel club I'm using this summer. These things must be found soon or else the trip's off, and I'm out of a job. Since I have no other job skills or training, either I trim the beast or give up the post.

It's not the first time I've had to make this decision. Just when the pressure gets too great to stand and I'm waking up on Sunday mornings and going through the morning ritual of getting ready to work only to realize when I start my car that I have one more day to "relax," I finally begin chewing off the fat from my monster-friend and slowly work my way back from May to September to locate those few precious lifelines I need. Maybe I can find out when the schedule and contract were sent to my office. If it was around February or so, it should be on the right-side pile about 40 percent of the way down . . .

Sacramento Scene

(Continued from Page 7)

Thus the basic skills issue leads to an even more thorny problem: the funding of entire programs. Sacramento funds credit courses. Every course or program that would be listed as too basic for the collegiate level could, therefore, be denied state funding. We could lose a substantial number of programs, a considerable number of students, and a corresponding number of faculty. Once the process of limiting offerings to college level courses is completed, some legislators see the next step as one to require proficiency exams before issuing degrees and/or certificates. They see the imposition of proficiency exams at community colleges as the logical extension of recently enacted proficiency exams in California secondary schools. CPEC is already exploring such a possibility at the request of legislative committees and is developing reports for the legislature in the areas of both communications skills and basic skills [see Dick Lundquist, "A Statewide Standard for College Writing?" *i.e.*, June 1980, pp. 1, 4].

One final area of major concern in Sacramento is the entire concept of vocational programs on community college campuses. Many believe that the private sector (the small, single curriculum, private vocational school or training center) provides better vocational training for students. Feeling runs high that these schools/centers are more in touch with the job market and more flexible in adapting to changes in job requirements. A small but vocal and influential lobby is suggesting that the state severely curtail, if not eliminate, its extensive and expensive program of vocational training on community college campuses in favor of a type of funding program that would provide some assistance to qualified students enrolling in vocational training courses in the private sector. Of course, the initial impact of such a move would hit hardest our colleagues in vocational programs, but all of us in departments with courses required for all students would also feel the impact.

None of these items is yet in the form of specific legislation. They are still in the "talk, advise, research" stage. However, if strong, immediate opposition is not forthcoming, they will quickly move to the action stage.

Now that the demon of Proposition 9 has been vanquished, we can expect to see a sudden surge in educational bills being submitted. Perhaps the most significant ones for us among those submitted for consideration during the last six or eight months were those affecting retirement. AB 2785 (Rosenthal) and SB 1557 (Sieroty) both concerned themselves with adjustments in retirement stipends better to keep pace with inflation; AB 2113 (Cline) was concerned with increasing the limit on earnings of certificated retirees; and AB 2578 (Johnson) was concerned with a liberalization in the policy of allowing a retiree to select a new beneficiary or name a new option. We will have to wait — but not silently, I hope — to see what the future holds in store for us, for funding our programs and our personnel.

☆ ☆ ☆

A note from Jim Cagnacci: It is with combined relief and regret that I inform you that I will soon be replaced as author of SACRAMENTO SCENE. Having recently assumed the presidency of ECCTYC, I feel it is time to pass the responsibility of liaison with Sacramento to someone else. Early this fall semester the Executive Committee will appoint a new face to assume these duties. At most, I will produce but one more of these columns while my successor is busy establishing contact with legislative staff members. Though the liaison task has not always been easy, I have found it a fascinating and enriching experience; I am sure it will prove the same for my successor.

EDGING

I edged the lawn this quiet Sunday morning
but not until I heard a power mower
up the street. Good neighbors wait, you know.
The bright blade bit into the dirt, snarling
against the concrete walk, chopping
into the prodigal grass, green with spring.
The grass had crossed a line that called it weed.

From a sidewalk crack, I pulled a straggler,
small, with oval petals damaged brown
by skateboards, bikes, and feet, and saw the bruised
unopened bud of some unwanted flower.

Our back-yard neighbor had begun to pound
and saw, struggling one more day to raise
a redwood fence atop the red-brick wall,
a pleasant fence, meant to shut out thieves.

And still I spun the blade, fighting the spread
of noxious green, training the life to stay
within the concrete boundaries, neat and straight,
a credit to my neighbors' impeccable lawns.

Well, there is nothing new in the idea
that space names grass and weed, just a fit
pedestrian thought that came while edging a sidewalk.
Yet still I wonder what edging has destroyed
and what would grow if we stilled the blade of curb
and custom,
what small, splendid flower
what unexpected life
what new, surprising love.

BERT WOODRUFF
Fresno City College

ENGLISH COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA ECCTYC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

inside english

Vol. VII, No. 2 **Journal of the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges** December 1980

INSIDE
inside english

ECCTYC
Looks at the Art of Writing

Garrison's approach to teaching writing needs to be augmented to provide enough varied writing experiences for the college writer.
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One teacher's sabbatical project results in one revitalized teacher and workbook of ideas to share with others.
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What do astonomy, astrology, rhetoric, and grammar have in common?
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What is ERIC? It both serves English teachers and needs them?
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One English department shares its answers to burn out.
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Let's Have Them Write

By SHIRLEY SYKES
San Diego Mesa College

IT WAS the end of the first class of the semester. "Mrs. Sykes, I know you aren't going to grade this first paper, but will you please read it right now?" The young man, tall and lanky, with traces of teenaged awkwardness and acne, stood over me, his face a mask of tension.

"Of course, Jim, if you want me to." I began to read the cramped, much-marked-over manuscript.

"Is that comma in the right place? I know it's awful. I just couldn't think of anything to say. Is that semicolon right?" The questions and apologies tumbled out, giving me little chance to absorb the content — which was weak, tentative, uncertain, uptight.

An older woman approached me as I finished reassuring Jim. Ellen was back in school after fifteen years of marriage, four children, and a new divorce. "You mean we're *not* going to study grammar? But I've *got* to learn grammar so I can write. I've got to improve myself and get a job."

Driving home from the Mesa College campus that evening, I once again questioned the nature of the writing process and the purpose of developmental courses. The two students, Jim and Ellen, seemed to epitomize for me two fundamental misconceptions about the process of writing: that "correctness" must be the prime consideration, more important even than content; and that "learning grammar" automatically enables one to write well.

The second misconception is, perhaps, most easily explored. For at least thirty years, studies have shown that knowledge of grammar per se has little relation to the art of writing well. That is, the ability to correctly work through exercises involving parts of speech, to correctly identify adverbial or noun clauses, or to point out errors of verb or pronoun agreement in a work-book has little significant carry-over into one's writing. (See, for example, Constance Weaver, *Grammar for Teachers: Perspectives and Definitions*, NCTE, 1979.) "Learning grammar," then, should not be a prime consideration in the composition process, nor should it occupy a significant amount of time in a developmental composition class. Yet far too many of such classes stress grammar and workbooks above composition, even to the exclusion of all but the simplest forms of writing, such as those required to complete a workbook sentence or to show examples of certain types of clauses or phrases. The panic Ellen felt was actually with the need to write fluently and accurately, not to know grammatical terminology or to construct a sentence containing a noun clause. She, like Jim, needed to develop confidence in her latent writing ability.

Writing is a skill which is developed through practice and guidance; to state it briefly, writing is learned by writing. Only as a student begins to achieve a fluency and a sense of his own voice will he or she be ready for and receptive to instruction in grammar and syntax. Often, of course, a student may need to drill in certain stubborn areas (verb endings, pronoun agreement), but such drill should be within a specific context, the composition process, and only when the student is ready for the final stage of that process: revision and editing.

Think for a moment of a student in a typical skill class: pottery-making, say, or diving (I believe we all agree that writing is a skill). This eager student does not learn pottery or diving by listening to a series of lectures or by memorizing terminology, although these may indeed comprise a part of the course content. Rather, success comes through constantly practicing the skill—throwing and

manipulating the clay or doing repeated swandives or triple gainers. The student's progress at first is awkward and tentative, but with increased experience comes increasing confidence and ability. Similarly, the student writer learns to write by becoming involved in and eager about the process of writing, by continual practice, not by listening to lectures, analyzing prose models, or memorizing grammatical terms or syntactical functions.

BUT HOW does a student achieve fluency in writing? To consider this question, we should look at the other misconception about the composition process: the idea, widely-held, that correctness is the ultimate goal of writing.

No one, of course, will deny the importance of correctness in writing. Our legal documents, newspapers, business letters, novels, how-to-do-it manuals, and even our poetry require close attention to spelling, punctuation, and correct sentence structure (even though poetry often bends the rules). But research into the process of composition has clearly shown that this writing process has several stages, and correctness is the *last* step in the process. (See, for example, Cooper and Odell, *Research on Composing: Points of Departure*, NCTE, 1978.) Far more immediate to the act of writing is the prewriting stage: brainstorming, clustering, searching for ideas, writing the first raw, rough draft, finding the ideas that spring to life in the very act of writing itself; as James Britton has said, "shaping at the point of utterance." In this first, vital stage of the process, culminating in a draft of expressive/formative writing, the student as well as the professional writer discovers exactly what it is she or he has to say and begins to determine the form best suited to carry the message. This first process, *without the penalty of grades for correctness*, should be emphasized to a far greater extent, both in developmental and freshman composition classes—through journals, free writing, and experimental rough drafts. The lack of this stage is a major cause of weak, empty, superficial essays — what Ken Macrorie calls "Engfish" — the bane of concerned English instructors.

As student writers find their ideas, voice, and audience through ungraded expressive/formative writing, they also begin to recognize the forms appropriate for reaching their audience. Only after this stage need they begin to concern themselves with correctness, the final essential quality. Fluency stems from expressive/formative writing and, as Marlene Griffith of Laney College has shown, fluency leads to form and then to correctness. Donald Murray has aptly termed these stages "prevision, vision, and revision," each dependent on the previous one. This sequence, unfortunately, is the reverse of the usual college teaching process, which places first emphasis on correctness, the next on formal rhetorical structure, and little or no emphasis on fluency.

I see Griffith's formula and Murray's sequence operating as I write this paper. My "prevision" began with a deep concern for the composition process and the need to share that concern with my colleagues. This concern, expanded in journal writing and clustering attempts, culminated in two early drafts — rambling assortments of ideas, impressions, and information. From these came the "vision" — the opening dialogue and the determination to focus on two primary concerns derived from that dialogue. The third draft I am now writing, although far

(Continued on Page 8)

Letters

[Editor's note: The following letter was received by Dr. Gertrude Fujii, immediate past-president of ECCTYC.]

Dear Gertrude:

Thank you for your letter of June 6 concerning the three public segments' resolution on workload for teachers of composition. [These resolutions were printed in *i.e.*, September 1980, p. 3.] As you may know, the Commission [California Postsecondary Education Commission] has been on record in the past several years as supporting a modified workload for teachers of composition to enable students to receive the necessary individual attention to improve their writing skills. We particularly supported the State University in its request to reduce the student/teacher ratio in remedial writing courses to 17:1.

The Commission will continue to be supportive of efforts to increase students' writing capabilities, particularly through the vehicle of the Intersegmental Committee on Writing Skills. It is my belief that the efforts of this committee — including its role in gaining legislative endorsement and funding of the California Writing Project, and its efforts to establish a statewide minimum standard for college level writing — have had, and will continue to have, a major, positive influence toward the improvement of student writing skills. Thank you for your continued work on the Intersegmental Committee.

Sincerely,
PATRICK M. CALLAN
Director
California Postsecondary Education Commission

REDUCED LOADS *NOW*

Dear Editor:

I feel compelled to respond to Richard Reeb, Jr.'s letter in the last [Sept. 1980] edition of *i.e.*, in which he argues that English instructors "instead of concentrating on winning . . . the right to reduced loads for teaching writing, . . . should insist on writing in *all* liberal arts courses. When (or if) the faculties of community colleges come to appreciate

More Letters . . .
Page 4

the value of writing for a good education, perhaps they will come to appreciate much better than they do now the importance of reduced class loads or maximum class sizes for English teachers to do their work well."

There's an odd mixture here of the ideal and the impractical. I wouldn't for a moment quarrel with the principle of cross-curricular writing. As far as I know, English instructors have *always* insisted that writing is not an activity exclusive to English classes. And indeed, we do have colleagues in other disciplines who recognize this and who ask their students to write papers and essay exams.

But to suggest that English instructors *first* convince reluctant colleagues of the virtue of writing and only *then* seek load adjustments that make the teaching of writing possible is to overlook several compelling realities:

—There are many remedial students whom instructors of transfer courses in other departments see little of, especially if the courses they teach require writing.

—Many instructors outside of English do not want to assign or teach writing. In fact, some do not even understand the nature of writing or the teaching of it. Worse yet, some cannot write well themselves. Many of these bitterly resent load differentials for English instructors.

—The most we can expect is that some instructors will regularly assign written work. But there is a great difference between assigning, reading, and grading writing; and *teaching* writing. One can't reasonably expect history and biology teachers to take time to go over papers and exams with students; or to explore the dynamics of the writing process; or to study tone, organization, grammar, usage, and various modes of writing.

—Even with sympathetic colleagues who assign written work, we are caught in a catch-22: "You teach them to write and I'll assign writing." "No, you assign writing and that practice will help us better teach students to write." "No, etc. . . ."

But even if we do make a determined effort to persuade our colleagues about the need for widespread writing (and I think we should try), what in the meantime are we supposed to do about unworkable teaching loads in composition? Mr. Reeb says that our approach is not "bold" enough. I submit that nothing could be bolder than a sweeping reduction in teaching load for community college and high school English teachers; nothing could have better effect on the teaching of composition than to say to English teachers, "OK, now it's a bit more possible to do what you know you want to do. Now you can really try some of those remarkable techniques you've been hearing about."

A pipe dream? Maybe so. But it's a pipe dream that makes sense to every English teacher struggling with too many papers and too many students.

DICK LUNDQUIST
English instructor
Cabrillo College

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Dear Editor:

Our department uses the S.A.T., the D.R.T. (Diagnostic Reading Test), and the A.C.T. as screening devices for initial admission to our English 1A [Freshman Composition] classes. We use the following numbers for minimum admission: S.A.T. — 428; D.R.T. — 68; A.C.T. — 20. We wonder if other departments use the same tests, and, if so, what numbers are used for admission to English 1A. We are interested in knowing if any department uses some other mechanical or objective basis for sorting students for admission to writing classes.

The last time I asked the Chancellor's Office questions like these, I was told that the Office did not collect such data. Perhaps there is a source for such information that I need to know.

At any rate, I would appreciate what information you have out there. I would like both kinds — information that differs from ours and information that is essentially similiar.

Thank you,
ARNOLD SOLKOV
Chair, English Department
Santa Rosa Junior College

[Replies to Mr. Solkov's question should be sent to him at Santa Rosa Junior College, 1501 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.]

Notices

MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION
27-30 December 1980, Houston, TX.
Write: Convention Manager, MLA, 62 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011.

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH CATE '81
20-22 February 1981, Red Lion Inn, Sacramento, CA. Speakers include Dame Judith Anderson, Maya Angelou, and Howard Fast.
Write: Hal McCune, 12915 Telegraph Rd. #D, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670.

1981 CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION
26-28 March 1981, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Dallas, TX. Theme: "Our Profession: Achieving Perspectives for the 1980's."
For program information write: James L. Hill, Dept. of English, Albany State College, Albany, GA 31705.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TEACHERS OF ENGLISH SPRING CONFERENCE
4 April 1981, CSU Long Beach, Long Beach, CA.
Write: SCTE, P.O. Box 4427, Whittier, CA 90607.

DICTIONARY OF WOMEN WRITERS, 1600-1800
Janet Todd (Dept. of English, Douglass College, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, NJ 08903) is preparing a biographical dictionary of eighteenth-century British and American women writers. She would like to hear from persons interested in contributing entries.

See Upstate/Downstate [p. 6] for additional notices.

inside english
The Journal of the
English Council of
California Two-Year Colleges

Barbara Bilson .....Editor

Contributing Editors
Barbara Bilson
"REviews"

Gordon Taylor
"Sacramento Scene"

Advertising Editor
Jeannette Webber

inside english is published four times a year: September, December, March, and June.

i.e. welcomes writing of interest to instructors of English in California two-year colleges. Send submissions and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

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inside english
Santa Monica College
1900 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(213) 450-5150, ext. 258

i.e. offers individual subscriptions at $5.00/year and commercial subscriptions at $20.00/year.

inside english is printed by Los Angeles Trade-Technical College Printing Department.

TO THE READERS OF *i.e*

For the purpose of compiling for this journal a list of innovative and salable humanities courses, we are asking that you send us titles and brief course descriptions. ECCTYC is particularly interested in cross-disciplinary classes that are geared to or might appeal to occupational students or business majors.

Also, if you have any flyers outlining special humanities programs or events outside the classroom (especially ones that bring new constituencies to our campuses), we would appreciate your sending us copies of them. Please let us know if you are planning any programs.

Thank you for your cooperation.

JULIE HATOFF
Mira Costa College
Oceanside, CA 92054
(714) 757-2121, Ext. 240

JACK GILL
College of San Mateo
San Mateo, CA 94303
(415) 574-6306

At its Spring meeting ECCTYC will be considering workload guidelines for:

1) the total number of composition students per faculty member,

2) the frequency of non-composition classes in workloads,

3) the maximum number of students in composition classes,

4) the maximum number of composition classes in workloads,

5) the amount of writing expected in classes,

6) the consideration given to different types of classes (remedial, 1A, 1B).

Please direct all inquiries and requests for assistance in matters of English composition workload to Robert Mognis, Chairperson Literature and Language Arts Division, Modesto Junior College, Modesto, CA 95350.

Inside english Deadlines

March 1981 issue
Friday, 30 January 1981

June 1981 issue
Friday, 24 April 1981

December 1981 issue
Friday, 23 October 1981

GARRISON RETHOUGHT

The Professional vs the College Writer

By KEVIN J. RYAN
Santa Monica College

I was recently rereading an article by Roger Garrison explaining his theory of teaching writing and a perplexing question came to mind. Garrison advocates teaching beginning college writers in the same manner that professional writers learn: by self-instruction, writing solely on topics of personal interest with the guidance of an editor (the teacher). I liked this approach (especially the emphasis he places on the student developing his "writer's intuition"), but as I kept reading, I felt there was something missing.

Okay, I thought, a Chemistry major interested in Science Fiction enrolls in my English One. Is he going to put his heart and soul into an essay comparing and contrasting a Hemingway story in the anthology to a Bellow's or into one discussing the possibility of life on the other planets? Hardly a moot question. As Thoreau noted in his journal on January 30, 1852: "It is in vain to write on chosen themes. We must wait till they have kindled a flame in our minds. There must be the copulating and generating force of love behind every effort destined to be successful." And, of course, this idea is central in Garrison's method: "The immediate result of your person-to-person work with students will be the need to develop dozens of different specific writing projects or assignments, literally tailor-made for individuals. . . . (And) it can be taken as a truism that real skill can only follow real interest. This should be the major guideline for designing student writing projects."

Yes, that's right, I thought to myself. All this is perfectly true, but something is not quite right. Professional writers must . . . That's it! That's what bothers me! *Time* would not ask a *professional* writer like Isaac Asimov to write a feature essay on the Soviet grain embargo, but next semester in Poli Sci 102, Professor Smith might ask my sci-fi buff *college* writer to do so. My question: editorless, will a Garrison-taught college writer be able to handle a topic that will be chosen for him, that he will not be thrilled about and that will require research? Furthermore, will he be able to handle an extemporaneous in-class essay exam?

The Writers' Tasks

Garrison's approach is designed more for the beginning professional writer than the beginning college writer. Their tasks are different. The professional will always write on something in his field of expertise, but the college writer will often not. Time is another consideration. The professional has (or makes) the time to revise over and over, but college writers frequently will be asked during tests to quickly formulate their thoughts on a given subject and write them out. Another frequent writing task will be to draw conclusions from reading assignments, synthesize and/or analyze the data, and relate his own ideas on the matter in a formal essay. The liberal education the college student opted to receive demands he be willing to do this, to study fields he knows nothing about

and may have had no previous interest in.

Garrison rightly perceived that freshman composition students are reluctant writers because they usually are forced to write on boring topics, and this produces dull papers and hours of dull reading for the writing instructor. Hence, his emphasis on creating tailor-made assignments for the students. But once that student leaves such a composition course and confronts the grainless Russians in Poli Sci 103, he reverts to being the reluctant writer. And once those in-class essay exams come around, he may be a resistant writer — unless he feels prepared for them. Freshman composition courses should introduce the beginning college writers to the various types of writing they will encounter later in school. This is the student's immediate need.

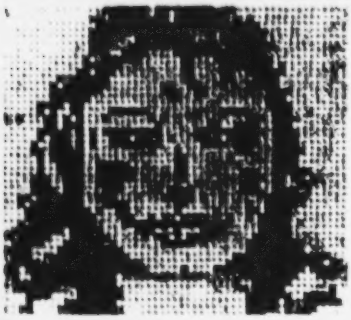
I am not suggesting that Garrison's method is incompetent, merely incomplete. I believe his one-on-one writing course is the best way to teach students the "writing process" and build confidence in their writing ability. I would follow Garrison's approach but include several impromptu in-class essays (on a single theme chosen by the teacher and related to a reading assignment) in preparation for a like midterm; a final along the same lines only longer; and at least one long essay near the end of the course that involves some research. These are the types of writing assignment the student will encounter throughout his college career, and he should be familiar with them.

The Instructors' Goals

The idea of across-the-curriculum writing fits in poignantly here. A one semester composition course will not produce expert writers; they need much more practice. And for most students, there will be only one place to get it: their other courses. But their other instructors must depend on research papers and long and short answer essay exams. Not only do they not have the time to create individual writing projects, but their goal is not to get students to write a lively essay about something they are familiar with, but to learn new information — to analyze it, weigh it, mull over it and assimilate it, and one of the best ways to do all this is through the writing process.

Also, the non-Englsih teachers will become quickly frustrated if they find their students incapable of writing exams or term papers and feel they are being asked to do too much: teach their own material and college writing. If interdisciplinary writing is to become a reality, students must enter their other courses prepared for these types of assignment. In this way, non-English courses can act as extensions of freshman composition, instead of a forbidding new type of writing course with no instruction provided.

Upon rereading my article, I sense in places what may be considered a belligerent tone, but hope that it will be rightly interpreted as too much heart and soul put into the writing. For I think Garrison's approach is extremely viable and the correct way for someone to learn how to write. All I'm saying is that when that someone is a student, minor changes are necessary to fit his special needs, to prepare the college student for college writing.



Crazy Bus Ride

"Here come the crazies," she said
(a high school girl across the aisle,
tightening in her seat beside the window).
I saw them on the corner:
lumpish, misshapen goblins
made up, no doubt,
for some bizarre charade.
The girl, who must have seen
my widened eyes, explained:
"They're from, you know, that special school."
I heard high cackles, slurred and sloven speech
as they besieged the bus.
They flopped and slopped in empty seats
while we, the normals, cringed.
A blue-rinse lady one row up
turned back to me,
rolling her eyes in mute appeal;
I thought she'd faint or scream.

The crazies without seats stood lurching
in the aisle,
poking, fondling those who sat.
All laughed and shouted in great glee.
Up front I saw the gargoyle wench,
weirdly nubile with majestic breasts.
Wrapping her arms about her middle,
bending herself clear to the knees,
she then rocked back and forth
with manic force —
panting, mouthing wild low cries
that could have been delight or pain.
Another crazie standing near
reached down and patted that convulsive head,
which stopped abruptly, turned,
and (my God!) smiled.
The blue-rinse lady rolled her eyes again
as if to say, "WHY do they let them out?"

The bus paused for some teen-age types,
provoking from the crazies raucous chants
of "College kids! Look at the college kids!"
Down their fermented grapevine
came nudge and whisper of conspiracy.
At the next stop
two of the crazies disembarked.
Macrocephalic he and dwarfish she
hugged each other off the bus
with loud farewells to those on board.
We waited for the light. I watched
the big-head with a grip on the whole world,
his penny-bank globe with bright blue seas.
A chuckling god with fragile Earth
in spastic hands.

We moved on down the street.
The buzzer sounded
as three goblins crowded by the exit. One
called out in piercing treble tones:
"Goodbye, you crazy people.
What do you want for Christmas?
I'll give you a paper bus —
a bus for paper people!"
And then it was my stop.
That night, surreal film-clips:
The grinning of gargoyles,
babbling out of Bedlam,
winking of fond wantons.
Poor, poor blue-rinse lady:
A topsy-turvy Mobius-trip,
the ultimate tit for tat.

DONALD DRURY
Long Beach City College

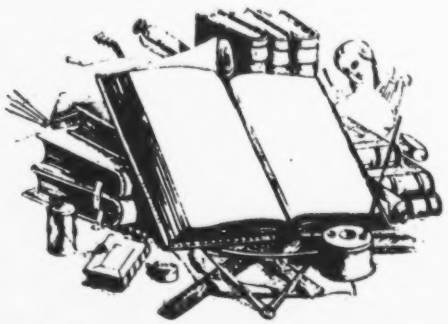
A SABBATICAL PROJECT

What's Happening in Freshman Comp

By HELENA (CURRIE) HALE
Santa Barbara City College

My sabbatical leave has ended. A revitalized teacher, I teach a revitalized freshman composition course to revitalized students. Responsible for this transformation from a burned-out teacher of one year ago are my colleagues in two-year colleges scattered throughout the state of California. Their generous sharing of expertise in teaching of freshman composition gave strong substance to my sabbatical project: *What's Happening in Freshman Composition Courses in the California Two-year College?* Forty-eight teachers participated in a 16-question interview. Over two-hundred teachers contributed their most successful writing task to establish a "Working Book."

The interviewees contributed a variety of stimulating philosophies of teaching, methods, materials, suggestions. Answers are combined into a 105-page report, valuable as a teaching aid. The writing tasks add up to 150 pages of resource materials of tremendous usefulness. All



contributors to the projects were sent copies of the completed work.

A summary of similarities and differences in answers that resulted from the interviews: 1. Similarities revealed primarily that most time is spent on student papers, alone and in conference. Rhetoric is the basic thrust of the course. Group work prevails in the classroom. Most necessary qualities for successful teaching are patience and a sense of humor. 2. A sampling of differences, which are many, revealed a wide range of attitudes and approaches. All writing must be structured; the only approach is practice in unstructured writing. Writing is content-oriented; intuitive writing is best. The study of writing models teaches organization; organization results from writing. Journal-writing is juvenile; journal-writing is invaluable. Teach no literature; read and write about literature. Write in a relaxed atmosphere; write under pressure. Rewrite every paper; do not rewrite. Grade from the heart; grade by a point system. And so on.

Selected answers to 3 of the 16 questions indicate varied teaching approaches:

Q. How do you grade?

"Written work is measured by a grading scale." "Grades reflect a subjective, overall impression and count more heavily towards the end of the semester." "A double grade covers content and mechanics." "Grades are based on content and supporting material with little stress on mechanics. Rewrites accepted if assignments are misunderstood." "No grading formula keeps grades flexible and intuitive." "Grades depend heavily on mechanics. Grading scale: 90-100 = A, etc." "Revision can change grade — optional."

Q. How do you teach awareness of audience?

"Direct student to write for the reader in the dentist's office who has a common experience with the writer. As a result, students do not summarize." "When students write for English teachers, they get stuffy, or if the strain is too heavy their writing becomes fragmented. By writing to a friend they emphasize communication. This same technique of focusing on one person out of a group is helpful as their concept of audience expands." "The audience is a classmate who has general knowledge." "The teacher is the reader." "Invent an audience, experiment with different levels of expression from simple to complex. Work with an audience in writing definition and process papers."

Q. How do you motivate students to write?

"Papers turned in on time win three extra points. No second papers are accepted until the first paper is completed. This system eliminates non-producers." "This course places the main responsibility on the students who must be disciplined enough to spend five or six hours a week writing in class plus an additional eight hours or more writing and in conference." "Grades — the desire for personal approval." "Giving students interesting enough ideas." "Reproducing papers for the class to read." "Time limits and deadlines. Time put into prewriting where students receive help in conference. The teacher working along with the student is best."

Q. Have you any additional comments.?

"Why do teachers of freshman compostion take it so seriously? They become so literal." "This is the critical course. You can't run without learning to walk. So many students need a compassionate reader of their writing — someone who has something good to say about anything and everything." "There are as many good ways of teaching writing as there are good writers. Don't bring in classic essays because some parts reflect the writer's mind which is not always clearly organized. *The New Yorker* contains short works which are clear, concise, and organized. The research paper is a burden and would be better as a separate course."

Writing up these answers was like looking into a Kaleidoscope, the many bits and pieces of variously shaped, brightly colored pieces of glass floating randomly, then suddenly joining to form distinct designs of endless variety.

The second part of the project, the "Working Book," demonstrates how one group of articulate thinking human beings is helping another group of thinking human beings in its struggle to articulate. A question, "Describe your most successful writing task — what it is, how you teach it, and why," brought a multitude of answers that covered most writing problems. These writing tasks were grouped according to their functions for easy reference as a teaching aid. They are unique in that they reflect current composition classes "in action."

The most valuable result of my sabbatical project has been the sharing of ideas and techniques in teaching this controversial course. This sharing results in ultimate enrichment of students.

The ideas I collected work. I know. I'm using them. With delight. They stimulate my students.

What's happening in freshman composition? The infinite task of teaching the infinite process of thinking.

The "Working Book" (150 pages) can be ordered at $8/individual copy and $5/each in lots of 25. Direct all orders, queries, or requests for further information to Helena Hale, Santa Barbara City College, 721 Cliff Dr., Santa Barbara, CA 93109.

ECCTYC WORKSHOP IN RESEARCH AND WRITING

By REBECCA WELCH
Saddleback College

On Friday, October 17, 1980, ECCTYC sponsored a one day workshop at Cypress College for selected community college teachers from Southern California. Richard MacIntyre, Chair of the Language Arts Division, was a most gracious host.

One of the goals of the workshop, which was co-chaired by Judith Hert, chair of the ECCTYC Committee on Research, and Barbara Bilson, editor of *i.e.*, was to provide an opportunity for those attending to share their ideas for projects and/or written materials. Participants were given an ERIC bibliography on innovative teaching approaches and were encouraged to submit their materials to ERIC. [See page 8.]

During the morning and afternoon sessions, informal presentations were made, and participants were encouraged to pursue issues which the presentations prompted. In the process of these discussions, several themes emerged. Helena Hale of Santa Barbara City College discussed her recently completed study which synthesized successful composition strategies used by community college teachers. [see p. 4] This commentary rather naturally led to a discussion of the varied and ostensibly inconsistent approaches to composition advocated by the teachers present. Mary Spangler and Rita Werner of Los Angeles Valley College discussed their new mastery text, and Pat O'Brien of Cypress College detailed the parallel between the strategies used for successful magazine writing and those pertinent to good academic writing. Rae Jean Popham, Co-Director of the UCLA Writing Project, concluded this discussion by noting that, in her opinion, writing is not a matter of form *or* content but a matter of process.

Although consensus was not reached about the best approach to teaching composition, it was agreed that the development of writing skills throughout the curriculum needs to be stressed. Pat Grignon of Saddleback College talked about her work in an adjunct writing program which grants composition credit for work done in conjunction with a humanities sequence. Several other participants discussed working on writing assignments with teachers from other disciplines. Jinny Webber and Evanne Jardin of Santa Barbara City College supplemented this phase of the discussion by suggesting that journal writing be used to enhance writing skills.

At the end of the meeting, participants agreed that they had benefited from the open exchange and the positive discussion of issues. Most expressed a need for this kind of renewal and looked forward to continuing this kind of informal yet productive workshop.

More Letters

(Continued from Page 2)

THE FAR REACH OF *i.e.*

Dear Editor:

Thank you for printing the article about my workshops, "Writing Competence Across the Curriculum," in the September [1980] issue. You will be interested to learn that I have had some positive responses to it. Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria, Gainesville Junior College in *Georgia*, and Fresno City College have written to request the materials and curriculum I developed.

In the next few weeks I will be interviewing the workshop participants to see what positive effects they are experiencing this semester. I will be glad to share their opinions in the next issue of *inside english*.

Sincerely,
MARY SPANGLER
Los Angeles Valley College

Rhetoric as Implied Science

By DON K. PIERSTORFF
Orange Coast College
Long Beach City College

Astromomy is that science which studies the planets, the stars, and all the other heavenly bodies in terms of their composition, motion, size, relative position, and the like. Astrology is that system which predicts the future of mankind by examining the planets in their relationships to each of us. At one time, astronomy and astrology were married, but as astronomy became more and more scientific and astrology became more and more nonsensical, they divorced. No one has seen them cavorting together for years.

Transformational-generative grammarians — linguists, if you will — are akin to astronomers. They are engaged in the most exiting decades of their discipline since the publication of Plato's *Phaedrus*. The material they work with, *speech*, coupled with the constraints they work within — they assume an *ideal* speaker, for instance — help them to form language models which are remarkably insightful. Interestingly, the question whether linguists are scientists is moot. Some will say that they are; others will just look at you strangely and walk away. Many of them in fact use scientific modeling, and they do it out in the open, guilelessly.

On the other hand, astrologers and too many modern rhetoricians have been at pains lately to disguise their disciplines as sciences. For example, some modern astrologers provide their clients with computer printouts of their horoscopes. There is a certain sort of scientific madness to this approach. It produces decided awe, if not abject fear in some cases, in the hearts of those laymen who have eight feet or so of crisply folded IBM paper plopped into their hands, paper sprinkled with symbols which purport their futures in no certain terms. Many newly informed astrologers' clients are astonishingly ignorant of the fact that somewhere, someone was responsible for putting those symbols into those computers in the first place. Many of those symbols represent vocabulary, and much of that vocabulary, such as *heliarc, gravitational restriction, emergent crossover patterns,* and *systemic conversion,* looks quite scientific, scientific enough to dumfound the meek until their signatures dry on their checks. At least since the invention of movable type, the pretentious among us have known that scientific terminology will cloak even the vaguest thinking, if only so long as it takes for that thinking to find its way into print. Everyone who can read knows that examples abound.

Excepting the humanistic ones, such as Richard Young, James Kinneavy, Robert M. Gorrell, Edward P.J. Corbett, and Donald C. Stewart, of course, many published rhetoricians are astrologically oriented in at least one sense: for reasons that can never be clearly outlined because they themselves confuse speech and writing, these rhetoricians represent writing as a scientific phenomenon which has somehow always existed — much as the stars and other heavenly bodies. They seem to forget that writing was invented by a bunch of illiterates.

Every rhetorician in print who blithely tosses around terminology such as "T-unit length," "psychological reality," "critical mass," "schematize," "right-hemispheric cerebral organization," and "gene-scene," without carefully defining those terms and how they fit into the teaching and understanding of writing (when he *says* that they do) is not talking about ordinary words or ordinary sentences or ordinary paragraphs or ordinary essays.[1] But he may be illustrating what a full moon does to some people.

It is just as unethical to mask a study of rhetoric, which deals with verbal artistry, by a corpus of mechanical terms as it is unethical to predict one's future on the basis of an astronomical system that is one constellation, or sign, behind the dates assigned by an astrology column 2,000 years ago.[2]

Writing is difficult to teach and difficult to learn. What we don't need more of are terms for the same old problems. Why, for example, would an English composition teacher want to say, "You are having problems with interpropositional connections,"[3] when he can already say , "I don't understand this sentence"? The reason teachers ask students questions is to elicit responses, not bug-eyed stares.

"Writing is difficult to teach and difficult to learn."

The teaching of writing is still a people-to-people pursuit.[4] First there's writing, then there's editing, then there's rewriting. That's how the act of writing is done. There is no such thing as "the process of composition." Processes are natural; writing is not. It is barely tolerable to read stuff like, "The future of the profession [teaching English] holds a great deal of promise; we are well into the era of 'technical breakthrough'; we are at the point where we have the 'software' and the 'hardware' to do a much more effective job than we have in the past."[5]

How do you get a student to write competently? You do *not* begin by trying to define "competency." (A polar bear is like competency: you've probably never seen a polar bear, but when one comes along, you'll recognize it.) If you must, wave a grade book in a student's face. Tell him, "Look, if you don't write, you don't pass. And if you don't pass, guess whose face you'll be looking at for another semester?" He'll write, and so will those who overheard you. And you don't have to worry about dialects in an English composition class because you don't deal with them. Instead, you point out the obvious: writing is, for us, the universal representation of the English language. When you hear it, you may not understand the English of a person from India or from Nigeria or from St.Croix in the Virgin Islands. But if you write in taught, acceptable English prose to a person in one of those places, he'll respond in taught, acceptable prose. That, you'll both understand. But let's get back to the topic at hand.

Here is the noted astrologer Jean Dixon's horoscope for Geminis, for 31 July 1980:

> Friend can play key role in improving your financial status. Have a well-thought out plan in hand before approaching influential associate. A modest request is unlikely to be denied if presented at right time.
> (*The Register*, 30 July 1980, p. C-3)

Here is a statement from a fairly successful composition handbook:

> In the following pages, we will be discussing and trying out a variety of heuristics; but before we go on, I'd like to make an important remark. Even though we will be taking a rather close look at a variety of heuristics that are 'ready made,' it is perfectly feasible, and often necessary, for you to devise your own."
> (W. Ross Winterowd, *The Contemporary Writer: A Practical Rhetoric* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1975], p. 90.)

The similarity between the two passages is sadly obvious: In the second quotation, change the word "pages" to the word "days," and you have another horoscope.

Those of us who read our horoscopes daily know that for sometime now there has been a moratorium on the publication of papers which supposedly deal with the origin of language, and readers have been spared the chore of reading about ding-dongs, bow-wows, and woof-woofs, lately. That moratorium is a healthy precedent. We are fast becoming bored with *heuristic*, which came from the same Greek form that gave us *eureka*. Oddly, that brings us to Archimedes and his way of determining the purity of gold, a subject only a metaphysic away from alchemy. And if you think astrologers and some modern rhetoricians are full of ersatz science, you should have seen the alchemists. If certain rhetoricians ever get a hold on their vocabulary, we English composition teachers are doomed.

FOOTNOTES

[1]For a full treatment, see W. Ross Winterowd, "Syntax, Readability, Intention, and The Real World," *The Journal of English Teaching Techniques*, 10 (Summer, 1980), pp. 21-31.

[2]That current astrology is out of tune is explained in Wallace Tucker, "The Universe: The Virgin Returns," *Science Digest* (Nov./Dec. 1980), p. 12.

[3]This term is defined and explained in W. Ross Winterowd, "'Topics' and Levels in the Composing Process," *College English*, 34 (Feb. 1973), p. 707.

[4]This notion has been best treated recently in Clifton Fadiman and James Howard, *Empty Pages: A Search for Writing Competence in School and Society* (Belmont, Calif.: Fearon Pitman Publishers, Inc. 1979) *passim*.

[5]Winterowd, p. 708.

REVITALIZING ENGLISH FACULTY AT SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE

By ELINOR FLEWELLEN
Santa Barbara City College

On Sunday, October 26, the first SBCC English Faculty Colloquium was held in the home of Jinny Webber, head of the English Department at SBCC. The monthly seminar was suggested to explore selected topics, involving all the English faculty, featuring one or more scholars or experts (!) from within the department at each meeting.

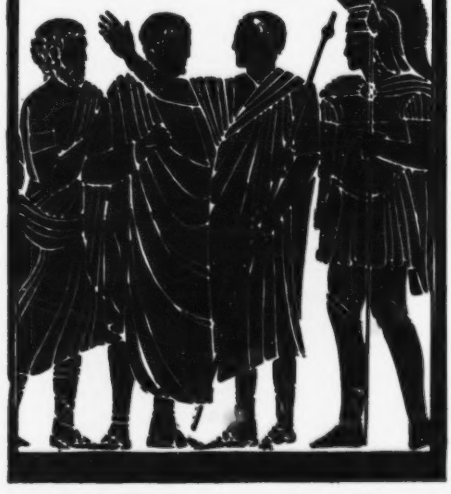
Although the colloquium will satisfy intellectual thirst, the intent is to provide relief from pedagogic drudgery. Each of us has developed some particular expertise which is of negligible use in our coursework. Some of us indulge in creative efforts (poetry, fiction, painting, etc.), and some possess specialized knowledge of areas quite foreign to the rest of the faculty (Russian culture, Irish culture, Black American culture and their attendant literary giants, etc.).

The colloquium is designed to meet the needs of the English faculty, but other interested parties are welcome. Colleagues from other disciplines, aides from the tutorial center, spouses —all are invited.

Hosting is voluntary, but no one should incur great expense in the effort. Coffee seems basic, but those who attend are grateful for whatever proceeds from the generosity of the host. The *place* is the thing. The atmosphere should foster relaxation, since attendance is purely voluntary.

The Sunday meeting, from 2:00 to 4:00 or thereabouts, seemed preferable. At the first meeting, several faculty members read unpublished poetry. Reading were Helena Hale, Joan Grumman, Jinny Webber, Evanne Jardine, and Elinor Flewellen.

It is our mutual opinion that we have hit upon an idea that will foster appreciation for each other's abilities, provide an opportunity for off-campus relaxation, and generally improve the professional climate within the department. We heartily recommend similar efforts by all departments, especially English faculty who crave relief from the steady diet of composition courses.



REGION I: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Directors: Joe Fitschen, Lassen College; Gordon Taylor, Yuba College.

Shasta College in Redding hosted a Regional Conference on 7 November 1980, from 9:00 to 3:00. After enjoying morning coffee and spending time getting acquainted, the participants sat down to some serious discussion. Of concern to these attending were placement and proficiency exams, changes in programs, the new general education requirements, writing across the disciplines. Following lunch, everyone gathered to continue the discussions begun during the morning session. Gordon Taylor reported on the Fall Conference of the ECCTYC Board of Directors.

REGION III: SAN FRANCISCO SOUTHERN BAY/MONTEREY

Directors: Dick Lundquist, Cabrillo College; John Lovas, DeAnza College.

DeAnza College will host ECCTYC's Northern California Workshop in Research and Writing, Friday, 13 March 1981. The purpose of the all day workshop is to provide community college English teachers the opportunity to share with each other their concerns and projects and to gather information from one another relating to the teaching of composition. Those interested in the workshop should contact Judith Hert at San Bernardino Valley College, Barbara Bilson at Santa Monica College, or John Lovas at DeAnza College.

REGION VI: CENTRAL COAST

Directors: Michael Seely, Ventura College; Jeannette Webber, Santa Barbara City College.

Region VI will hold its Regional Conference, 20 March 1981, from 9:00 to 3:00 at Santa Barbara City College. The theme of the Conference will be "How Statewide Issues and Concerns Can Smear Your Chalkboard." Those interested in attending should contact either regional director.

REGION VII: NORTH LOS ANGELES

Directors: Leonard Franco, Pasadena City College; Sister Joseph Adele Edwards, Mt. St. Mary's College.

Terry Marre, Instructor in the English Department of Santa Monica College and a member of the Board of Governors of FACCC, has written a fine monograph, *What Price Humanities*. This sixteen page publication examines what the humanities mean and what their value is in our curricula, why they have — or seem to have — declined, and what the future holds for humanistic studies. Those interested in obtaining a copy may write FACCC, 926 J St., Suite 211, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Regional Director Sister Joseph Adele Edwards will be spending the first three weeks of January 1981 in England, co-directing an interterm student tour for humanities credit.

News from Our Regions

REGION X: SAN DIEGO

Directors: Ann Clutinger, San Diego Mesa College; Elaine McLevie,Grossmont College.

Region X held its Fall Conference, Friday, 5 December 1980, at Grossmont College. Dr. Carole Rother, Associate Dean, Division of Undergraduate Studies at San Diego State University, who chairs the University Writing Committee, met with the participants to discuss San Diego State's approach to the junior level writing proficiency requirements. The State of California has mandated this requirement for the State University and Colleges system by Fall 1981. Following the discussion an election was held for the regional director, whose term will begin 1 July 1981.

REviews

"REviews" features discussions of books and media programs that are suitable for use in writing or literature courses or that have special interest for teachers of English. These reviews should be from 100 to 500 words and should evaluate the book's or program's effective use in a classroom, in a learning resource center, by an individual student, or by the instructor. Include with the review all pertinent publication information, the number of pages or length of running time, and the cost.

MILLER, MY STUDENTS, AND ME

By DOUG LANE
Santa Monica College

"I began to wonder if I would ever write anything presentable. And then I thought: Fuck a duck." Henry Miller, ever the iconoclast, is seen in this book struggling to speak the language of the heart. He does NOT promise to teach us how to write. He knows better.

Georgia O' Keefe said that she spent ten years trying to learn how to paint landscapes by studying other landscape artists. "All they could tell me was how THEY painted THEIR landscapes." Some things you have to learn for yourself.

"I demanded a realm in which I should be both master and slave at the same time: the world of art is the only such realm. I entered it without any apparent talent, a thorough novice, incapable, awkward, tongue-tied, almost paralyzed by fear and apprehensiveness. I had to lay one brick on another, set millions of words to paper before writing one, real, authentic word dragged up from my own guts."

I'm a writer and a teacher of writing, and I am inspired by Miller's testimony. I feel about him the way he feels about some of his own influences: "My loyalty and adoration have been constant — for the same men, all throughout my life: Whitman, Emerson, Thoreau, Rabelais, above all. I still think no one has ever had a larger, freer, healthier view of man and his universe than Walt Whitman."

When Miller died last summer, he was the greatest living American writer. But he did not live to write. He was famous, yet he did not strive for fame. He was a world-famed sexual adventurer, yet he did not live for sex.

As Picasso said, "Creation is the only thing I care about." And Miller: " . . . . art, the art of living, involves the act of creation. The work of art is nothing. It is only the tangible, visible evidence of a way of life, which, if it is not crazy is certainly different from the accepted way of life. The difference lies in the act, in the assertion of a will, and individuality. For the artist to attach himself to this work, or identify with it, is suicidal. An artist should be able not only to spit on his predecessor's art, or on all works of art, but on his own, too. He should be able to be an artist all the time, and finally not be an artist at all, but a piece of art."

Miller was an action writer, as Jackson Pollack was an action painter. His words traced the flight of his spirit, which kept beating on into the continuum of time, leaving a trail of books in its wake. This kind of flying is tougher than most of us want to know: "To be born an eagle one must get accustomed to high places; to be born a writer one must learn to like privation, suffering, humiliation. Above all, one must learn to live apart."

Miller was a great man, a man worth knowing, and though he's dead, we still have the opportunity to meet him in his language: "Like every man I am my own worst enemy, but unlike most men I know too that I am my own saviour." And: "I speak in cosmological terms because it seems to me that is the only way to think if one is truly alive."

It's not always easy to remember Miller's words after reading them. They are a jumble of inspirational riffs and garbled autobiographical anecdotes. They resist codification; they are not "teachable." His prose is a sea which does not lend itself to analysis.

Schools are accredited institutions. They give credits to cooperative students. And they create icons. Miller was an iconoclast. He wasn't accredited by anyone but his friends when he wrote his first books. He was what the respectably bourgeois call a good-for-nothing.

Schools, and teachers of literature, are caught in a paradox. They presume to convey the works of great men. These words are the vessels of great, but ineffable, spirits.

Churches are caught on the horns of an analogous dilemma. The founders of great religions are almost invariably great souls, individuals who resist incorporation and generalization. But the organized orthodoxies which are instituted to preserve the messages of these great souls necessarily bastardize their messages. For how can the spontaneous be ritualized, the inspirational canonized and solemnized?

And how can writing be taught? How can students be encouraged to express their hearts instead of hiding them away in academic doublespeak? The teacher of writing is a priest, an intermediary between the great souls of the past and his students, his novitiates. His gospel includes poems, plays, novels, great speeches . . . .

I was privileged to have two very fine writers, Ed Doctorow and Joe Heller, for teachers. Between the two of them they gave me only one rule (Heller gave me the rule), and it isn't worth repeating. Both men know that there are no pat formulas or exercises which can teach the character inherent in first class writing.

The way Miller defined the word, writing " . . . is not a game played according to rules. Writing is a compulsive and delectable thing. Writing is its own reward." Sometimes it came easy to him: " . . . how it would come! I didn't have to think up so much as a comma or a semicolon; it was all given, straight from the celestial recording room . . . . I could almost SEE the Voice, so close, so impelling, so authoritative it was, and withal bearing such ecumenical import." Sometimes with difficulty: " . . . every line was written with great effort, written blindly, doggedly, without conscious realization of the meaning but with absolute certitude that it had significance."

But easy or hard, the possibility of failure was always there. And Miller failed as few writers have. He wrote millions of words which were only good enough to throw away. He was middleaged before he discovered his

"voice." He had the courage to fail on an epic scale, to gamble his whole life away. And he has so much of value to say to us partly because he learned so much from making so many mistakes.

I try to remember that every time I write and every time I read what my students write.

Henry Miller on Writing, edited by Thomas H. Moore, New York: A New Directions Paperbook, 1964, 216 pages, $5.25.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Looking Ahead—"College"

For a number of years now community colleges have had arrangements with their local high schools permitting eleventh and twelfth grade students who have completed available high school courses to enroll in community college classes, in some cases for high school credits but most often for college credits. Recently, the California State Legislature passed a bill by Gary Hart which has been signed into law. This Hart Bill allows all students, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to enroll in community college classes—at the discretion of the community college district.

Because many K-12 school districts are strapped by declining enrollments and decreased funds, they find themselves unable to provide all the courses students desire. The Hart Bill looks to the community colleges as the answer to this problem. Many districts that have eliminated entire programs, such as music and art, or have severely curtailed other programs, such as foreign languages and speech/drama, or have drastically reduced elective offerings in all subject areas are encouraged by this bill to look to the local community college as a viable alternative for their students.

Presently, high school juniors and seniors who want to take college courses must obtain permission from their school administration. Then the students are concurrently enrolled in both the high school and the community college, and the college is reimbursed by the state with a portion of the students' "Average Daily Attendance" allotment (ADA). The new Hart Bill mantains this system of funding for eleventh and twelfth grade students, but provides no direct state funding for students below the eleventh grade; instead, it specifies cooperative agreements with the community college districts to cover the college costs for these students.

In addition to the possible funding problem created by the Hart Bill, there is another area of the bill that may well give community college districts severe headaches. Recently, a law was enacted that mandated successful passage of proficiency tests for all high school graduates. Students who fail these proficiency examinations will not be eligible for high school diplomas. Under the Hart Bill, these students, if they are eighteen or have permission of their school district, can opt to attend community colleges to satisfy the course work for their diplomas and to work toward a college degree.

To date, community colleges have only worked with "accelerated" high school students. The Hart Bill opens the door for remedial students. What effect will this have on English Departments? Until now, the few high school students on our campuses have been enrolled primarily in our English 1A level freshman composition course; on rare occasion, one or two have progressed to the English 1B level; and even more rarely, one has been enrolled in a transfer-elective literature course. If our district administration formulates a cooperative program with the local high school districts, we will undoubtedly find numbers of high school students, even those below the eleventh grade, enrolled in our basic skills courses. Furthermore, if some of those students are enrolled because they failed the high school proficiency exams, our courses will have to be certified as offering adequate instruction in those areas of basic skills in which the students are deficient. This could mean the wholesale restructuring of present curricular offerings and the development of several new basic skills courses which will address specific areas—for example, reading or spelling or vocabulary.

English Departments should pay careful attention to any movements their districts make to enter into cooperative agreements with local school districts. Unless they help fashion these agreements, they may find themselves faced with impossible curriculum adjustments.

JIM CAGNACCI
City College of San Francisco

The Legislators and You —————$ACRAMENTO $CENE—————

By GORDON TAYLOR
Yuba College

The Sacramento Scene is new to me and I am new to it. For a while, I will be like unto the bube in the woods or Theseus in the Labyrinth with no Ariadne to lead the way. I feel complimented, though, that the Board of ECCTYC has the confidence to entrust the job to me, and I know that it will be interesting. My greatest reservation is that Jim Cagnacci is, as they say, a hard act to follow: he is witty, humorous, and perceptive.

As was the case in June, there is not much happening on the Scene: everyone is out either campaigning (the whole legislature is to be re-elected this year) or maintaining their* political fences if they are running in a relatively safe district. (Love those agricultural and sporting metaphors.) And that is the point of this column: now is the time to get in touch with our respective legislators to see where they stand and to encourage them to take the right stand.

Jim tells me that the scene at the legislature will be changing, that the legislators may have to cut their own budgets and their own administrative staffs. Whatever cuts they make will have been the result of Gann's initiative of 1978 (Proposition 4, which limits the rate at which the State's budget can be increased). If all this is indeed the case, they may have to turn more to outside sources than they have in the past for their information. If we encourage the legislators properly, such professional organizations as ECCTYC can have significant influence. We have always been able to furnish the legislature and its committees with information and expert advice, but it also seems that most of the legislators respond to calls from their districts more than they initiate things on their own. Considering all this, and with a new legislature, we must increase our efforts.

The issues remain. They involve money, as usual, as well as many different people's political values and biases: the issues of part-time teachers, basic skills courses, credit and non-credit courses, instructional loads; and the outcome of probably all these will depend on how the diminishing supply of money is doled out. The one bright spot in the picture (a photographic metaphor) is the increases, this Fall at least, in the population of students (significant in relation to ADA and Gann's initiative) which should bring in some extra money.

As most of you are, no doubt, aware by now, AB 8 (Section 84700 of the Education Code on financing the community colleges) expires on 30 June 1981. The legislature must have something to take its place, or the colleges will have no money for the following year. It intends, so it was said, to produce some permanent financing arrangements, but many people are sceptical. The Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges has set up two committees to establish its proposals—one a financial task force of financial experts, the other a group that looks at the political consequences of the proposals made. They are currently at work and nothing is yet definite. Some committees are holding hearings in various places (sometimes called *roadshows*), but the results are as yet inconclusive. The Assembly's Committee on Revenue and Taxation is meeting in Monterey on 13 November 1980 to consider additional rates approved by the voters and a half-billion dollars that resulted from taxes levied against the unsecured rolls of several counties at the time Proposition 13 was passed.

As I write, the presidential debates loom and the election is a week away: all a spectacle to behold. No one, of course, knows how it will all come out. Anyway, people are either out of town or just waiting and not talking much. The legislature will begin organizing itself in December, start working in January, and probably start hearings and working on bills in mid-February and early March. In the meantime, let us beware of the camouflaging bills, keep in touch with our representatives, and let ECCTYC know our concerns.

*I suppose the grammatical inconsistency is stylistically preferable to the unwieldy and tasteless *he/she his/hers* constructions, the general and neutral *he, his*, etc. being politically unacceptable these days.

TEXT OF ECCTYC MOTIONS ADOPTED ON 24 OCTOBER 1980

MOTION #1:
In light of the revised CSUC General Education requirements, ECCTYC recommends that community colleges insure that transfer certification of the written communication requirement be at least one term of the traditional freshman English Composition course (English 1A).

MOTION #2:
ECCTYC supports the principle that English faculty at each individual college be involved in determination of which English courses meet the criteria of a credit course.

MOTION #3:
ECCTYC supports the continued full funding of Basic Skills courses that meet the criteria of a credit course.

MOTION #4:
ECCTYC reaffirms its support of the finding and recommendations in the October 1979 Report of the State Chancellor's Committee on Basic Skills and urges the Chancellor and the Legislature to give this document proper hearing.

MOTION #5:
ECCTYC supports the continued full funding of ESL courses that meet the criteria of a credit course.

The Student, He

By MARGARET BOEGEMAN
Cypress College

A recent ECCTYC meeting in Southern California offered an occasion for some speculations on the sensitivity of teachers to gender designation and sex stereotyping. Holding forth at a conference table for several hours were fifteen community college English teachers, all earnestly describing their favorite teaching methods, pet gripes, political strategies, etc. After two hours of this discussion in the morning and another hour or more in the afternoon, I felt I had acquired a fair sense of the language my colleagues use to each other and to their students. They were clear and cogent speakers, impassioned of their discipline if frustrated by the conditions under which they must pursue it. I have no doubt that they are all good teachers and dedicated professionals. While they differed in methods and in educational philosophy, they displayed respect for alternative points of view.

However, for all the differences in perspectives presented, for all the different voices raised, they shared one pattern of speech which rang repeatedly in my ears. The pattern was so familiar as to be unobtrusive, yet when noticed was so relentless as to be oppressive. "When a student brings me his paper . . . ", one instructor began. "We make him go through these exercises," said another. "He gets his buns over to the library . . . " "I help him define the problem." "He really gains a useful tool." The student, he. The student, him. The student, his.

Naive that I am, I was at first surprised by this repetition. So I began to listen more carefully. Where was the student, she? Where even were the students, they? The student, he, seemed to have routed all competitors. The student, he, had assumed exclusive possession of the checkered and capacious concept STUDENT. The student, he, appeared to be the perfect Platonic ideal. Well, is he?

Historicaly, He

Historically, of course, the student has for many centuries been masculine. Education has only been widely available to women in this century (and is not yet available in every part of the globe). And our basic speech patterns go much further back than a single century. I was once told by a linguist that the feminine gender in inflected languages was a late addition to the Indo-European language group. First there was animate (masculine gender), then inanimate (neuter), and only much later came the feminine, which was obviously something other than animate or inanimate — pure Immanence perhaps. Yet the origins of our language are hardly prescriptive. We no longer use thee and thou, wouldst or wilt. Our vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation canons evolve with use. Language changes as it is pressured to change by social conditions, by convenience, and by our changing perceptions of the world. So there are two points to be made regarding the paradigm of the student, he. One is the commonplace that language reflects the way we think. If we think of the world as masculine and women as something "other" (but neither animate nor inanimate), then the Platonic ideal of the student remains he. If, however, we think of both women and men populating the world, and both as animate, then the Platonic masculine will no longer do. It is sloppy, inaccurate, and retrograde.

Second, language reflects (though often lags behind) social reality, and our social reality has changed. For some time we've known that women constitute a 51 per cent majority in our nation's population. Recently, they have also assumed the numerical edge in college. Current college enrollments show that roughly 53 per cent of the students nationwide are women. At some colleges, such as the one where I teach, the scales have tipped more heavily toward the student, she, at a ratio of about five to three. So the ideal of the student as masculine is no longer justified numerically. Yet the student, she, has apparently not penetrated the minds of the instructors before whom she sits, stands, talks and writes.

As I do not believe in the lofty supposition that the student, he, stands for all students, neither do I believe, as one colleague asserted, that "there's nothing we can do about language." There is indeed: overcompensate. Use the student, she. At least it will perk up some ears — in the classroom and in the faculty lounge

In all fairness, I should point out that this replication of the masculine image which I observed was the product neither of stuffy male chauvinism nor of antediluvian mentality. Of the fifteen instructors present, only three were men, and they were discreetly and unusually reserved during the course of the pedagogical discussion. Nor were there any instructors so addlepated as to be counting the days till retirement. The minds of these people were bright and alert; they are not the slugs of our profession but the innovators. All the more reason for my incredulity.

Innovatively, She

Could these be the same professionals who have demanded nonsexist textbooks for their courses, nonsexist language in their journals, nonsexist audiovisual materials for their classrooms? The answer has to be yes, and the next question can only be: what do we gain from introducing two genders of students in our books and films if we do not remember that both are present in the classroom? No text ever conceived could be powerful enough to counter the values conveyed by the living instructor, and no role model in a film ever so persuasive. If the instructor speaks only to and about the student, he, what message does that convey to the female majority? Can one suppose that the women are unaffected by this indifference to their presence? One might try addressing only the student, she, for a week, to see.

After several hours, when I tired of listening to the litany of he, him and his, I pointed out this verbal pattern to the group who was speaking. My remarks were met with a resounding silence. (Though one colleague tried to reassure me that we were all speaking of the masculine gender because, he said, "the guys are the ones who are the poor writers." So much for the Platonic ideal on intellectual grounds.) However, I did notice that the many discrete male students who had been used as examples throughout the day suddenly melted together and became the lumpen-students, they. The students, they, carried the remainder of the afternoon. Yet I still wondered what images remained in the minds' eye of the instructors who spoke, for even after my remarks not once did I hear a voice mention the student, she.

If we who are trained to be sensitive to words do not alter our language patterns with our consciousness, we remain as enslaved by inertia and thoughtlessness as the students we try to free. The majority of our students are women. Let us acknowledge their presence and this fact when we speak; let us recognize the student, she.

WHAT IS THE ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES?

The ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges provides a number of services for practitioners, researchers, administrators, and others interested in two-year college education. The Clearinghouse provides a search service for users. Manual searches of the ERIC Junior College collection are provided free on request. These searches find 15 or fewer abstracts of documents on the topic to serve as general background information, an update, or a sample of the kinds of materials in ERIC. Computer searches of the ERIC data base are $20 for the first 50 citations and 10¢ each for additional citations. The computer searches can cover all of the ERIC system including the journal literature and be as comprehensive as needed. The Clearinghouse also works closely with a number of associations and interest groups and is always interested in supplying materials for conferences and workshops. Bibliographies can be developed free of charge for associations.

ERIC depends on contributions to stay current and useful. The Clearinghouse is interested in many kinds of documents; for example, research studies, evaluation reports, speeches, position papers, project reports, curriculum guides, "how-to" manuals, and other materials that could aid ERIC users. If you have any materials that you would like to submit, please send two copies, one of which is clear, sharp, and suitable for microfilming to the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges, 96 Powell Library Building, University of California, Los Angeles 90024. To request searches, bibliographies, free publications, or for further information, write to the above address or call (213) 825-3931.

Let's Have Them Write

(Continued from Page 1)

more coherent and structured, is beset with mechanical and probably grammatical infelicities and downright mistakes. But if I were to stop and correct at this stage, I would stop concentrating on the "vision" — the thesis, controlling purpose, or main idea of this paper. Only when this stage is completed, when I feel I have said what needs to be said, will I polish and revise the paper and then type a fourth and, I hope, final draft, which will be checked meticulously for "correctness."

Working with the fluency—form—correctness formula, my students, Ellen and Jim, began to realize how much they had to say. As they concentrated more on voice and idea and searched for syntactical forms to carry their ideas, they began to realize how much grammar they actually know, and their "correctness factor" began to increase. Best of all, their writing developed meaning for them beyond mere red marks and grades, becoming a vehicle of learning and communication.

WITHOUT the first stage of my own expressive/formative writing, I should have been unable to generate this final draft. If I had been chiefly concerned with "correctness," I would have given up before I began. If we wish our students to learn to write well, we must recognize that composition is a vital *process*, not a correct but empty product. We must offer our students writing courses, not grammar courses, and show them how they can achieve fluency and confidence as well as correctness.

ENGLISH COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA ECCTYC TWO YEAR COLLEGES

inside english

Vol. VII, No. 3 | Journal of the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges | March 1981

INSIDE *inside english*

ECCTYC

Looks at Teachers and Their Critics

Donald White contends that maybe some teachers outside English can teach composition more effectively than many teachers inside English.
Pages 1 and 3

The Report on Retention and Transfer (known affectionately (?) as the Kissler Report) comes to some damning conclusions about the quality of student sent on to the four-year institutions from California community colleges. Gertrude Fujii and Frank Young examine some of these conclusions and the issues raised by them — and come to some very different conclusions about our students and our teaching.
Pages 4 and 5

You are invited to a Shakespeare Celebration.
Page 2

The humanities in the two-year colleges received a needed "shot in the arm" by the formation a few years ago of the Community College Humanities Association. Now the CCHA is coming West.
Page 2

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Upstate/Downstate .....page 6

Composition Made Easy Or

A Method For Teaching Writing So Simple Even a Literature Major May Understand It

By DONALD L. WHITE
Barstow College

[*Mr. White, responding to "Outside English," inside english, September 1980, p. 1, wrote the following: "I teach history, psychology, sociology, education, and orientation courses. I have also been a football coach, a teacher of health education, and statistics. I taught English in high school more than twenty years ago, and I also spent five years teaching in the elementary grades. Since I do not now teach English and so far as my present assignment is concerned I have never taught English, I believe it is significant that inside english was forwarded to me.*"]

MOST OF US in the community colleges teach English even if that is not our official assignment. While this particular responsibility was never sought, it must be undertaken if we are to effectively teach the material for which we are responsible.

There are two reasons for this circumstance. First, if we are to have employment, we need students. If we wait around for English teachers to prepare students for us, we'll be out of work. Second, mastering, acquiring, or learning some information is only half the process of education. The learning process is not complete until the student can express what he has learned.

My students learn to write. I am not certain why they do this, though I suspect it is because my classes are not English classes. In English classes students write "writing." In my classes the students write "something." There is a lot of difference between writing writing and writing something. I could spend a lot of time trying to explain to English teachers how they defeat their own purposes through the attitudes conveyed and the approaches used, but I'll summarize it all by saying, "English teaching is implicitly artificial. It is irrelevant to most students, and it is based upon trivialities."

I do not have a lot of time to waste on teaching composition. In consequence of this fact all of my teaching is compressed into three lessons. The three lessons include: Expository Writing, Writing a Paper, Answering an Essay Question, Doing Your Term Paper. (Don't be picky. I know there are four topics. One of them is not specifically treated in class.)

The following are not verbatim reports of my class session because there is a much higher degree of vulgarity and spontaneity involved in the actual presentations.

FIRST LESSON:

The following chart is placed on the blackboard and each student is given a reproduced copy for his reference.

TITLE
INTRODUCTION
BODY
CONCLUSION

"In this class you will be expected to write. You will write reports. You will write essay question responses. You will write a term paper. I will teach you how to write. You will write according to my rules and my requirements.

"**Rule 1:** Forget all the Bullbleep they have been feeding you in English. We don't have time for that crap in this class.

"All right. Have you forgotten it?"

(Occasionally a really honest student will admit that he'd actually forgotten it a long time before he entered my class, but most students are so brainwashed by the system they pretend they did it only because I asked them to do so.)

"The first thing I want you to learn is that I don't want you to do anything you do not already know how to do. Expository writing is the normal way in which we learn to express our feelings, our opinions, our beliefs, and our attitudes. Everyone of you knew the correct structure for expository writing before a bunch of misguided composition teachers began to confuse your thinking. Now, I'm going to prove that statement."

(I enjoy this part of the presentation because I enjoy performing. The "tirade" varies with my mood and inspiration, as well as with the makeup of the class, but it is essentially the same in character from class to class and quarter to quarter.)

"George" (Here I point at the Title Block on the board). I like "George" because when the name is yelled in outrage and indignation it becomes "Jaw . . . urge."

"Jaw . . . urge" I repeat, pointing at the block entitled Title and ask the question, "What is this 'essay' about?" (We can usually agree that it's not about kidney disease or numismatics of the psi phenomenon. In fact, with very little confusion, most of the class readily grasps the idea that whatever may happen, the rest of my presentation is going to involve George.)

(Having agreed that the title of the essay, and therefore the subject of the essay, is "George," we are ready to proceed.)

"Jaw . . . urge, you are the stupidest, most inconsiderate, self-centered son of a bitch I know." (This introductory statement is accompanied by pounding on the tidy little block labeled Introduction.)

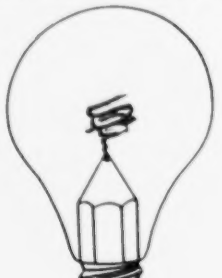
"Do you have any doubt about what this individual's opinion of George is? Is this person happy with George? Are you in any way confused about where this person is coming from? Who do you think this person is?" (Wife, boss, brother, mother, father, teacher? Would it help to know who this person is? It really doesn't matter, but for the sake of clarity and because I like a little variety, I change the author at this point to fit my creative talents for invective on that day. Let's assume I've chosen 'wife.')

"Okay, it's his wife and she's going to unload . . . wait a minute, is there anyone here who thinks that after that kind of introduction she's not going to say any more?

"That's right. It's only the beginning. What comes next?"

(Students know what comes next. She's going to prove her accusations. She's going to give examples of his selfishness and stupidity.)

"Here it is, eight o'clock, I've been



waiting supper for three hours, but did you ever think about me? No, all you ever think about is yourself."

(Which charge or accusation is she trying to support?)

"You've been down there at Ernie's, drinking beer, playing pool, and losing money you know you need for a new set

(Continued on Page 3)

Notices

CCHA COMES WEST

The Community College Humanities Association (CCHA) kicks off its Western Division Inaugural Conference on Friday and Saturday, April 24 and 25. The theme is "Renewal in the Humanities." Hosted by El Camino College, the conference will be held in the Airport Park Hotel near the Los Angeles International Airport. The keynote speaker will be Henry Steele Commager, the noted historian.

The CCHA, founded in 1979 with grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Mellon Foundation, hopes to establish a network of active community college humanists who will share ideas and successful programs at annual regional conferences. This conference, the first in the Western-Pacific Division, has been designed to convey to those in the humanities practical information, such as how to write grant proposals, how to make interdisciplinary studies work, and how to organize successful outreach programs. The conference also aims to make other humanities agencies and institutions aware of the community colleges' humanities potential, and to foster cooperation with such diverse groups as art museums, symphonies, humanities institutes, and state affiliates of NEH. The CCHA sees humanities education as a necessary and continuing part of every person's education, and it hopes to engage both secondary schools and graduate institutions in a dialogue about common goals.

Registration forms and more detailed program information will be arriving at your community college via humanities division(s), or contact Dr. Margaret Boegeman, CCHA Western-Pacific Division Chair, c/o Cypress College, 9200 Valley View, Cypress, CA 90630, for additional information.

AN INVITATION TO A SHAKESPEARE PARTY

During the fall and winter of 1981-82, there will be an explosion of hundreds of educational and artistic activities taking place in Southern California, centered around Shakespeare and the Renaissance. This Season of Celebration is a reponse to three important events:

1. the remarkable multi-media exhibition from the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., "Shakespeare: the Globe and the World," will be in Los Angeles for two months;
2. the famous Old Globe of San Diego, its theatre destroyed by an arsonist in 1970, will open a marvelous new theatre in December or January;
3. the PCPA of Santa Maria and Solvang will inaugurate a new professional theatre company called Solvang Theatrefest.

Twenty-seven Southern California colleges and universities, public and private, have already decided to declare a Shakespeare Quarter (or semester) next autumn or winter, and the number is expected to rise to nearly one hundred. They will be sponsoring theatre productions, music and dance programs, lectures, library exhibits, special interdisciplinary courses, and Renaissance feasts and fairs. Also, they will in every way possible be taking advantage of the exhibition and the great variety of professional Shakespearean theatre productions, scholarly conferences, film festivals, special visiting lecturers, and performances of Renaissance music and dance.

Consider this a warm invitation to join your colleagues in sister institutions from the Mexican border to San Luis Obispo in this unique endeavor. For further information, please contact:

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University of California
Santa Barbara 93106 OR

PROFESSOR LILLIAN WILDS
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Pomona 91768

WRITERS FOR i.e.

The June 1981 issue of *i.e.* will look at literature. We welcome longer articles or brief discussions on any aspect of teaching literature at the two-year college (approaches to, problems with, or whatever). Also of interest to our readers are reviews of literature texts or media adjuncts to teaching literature.

The September 1981 issue of *i.e.* will look at writing labs. Since this issue has to be at the press by the end of July, we would appreciate your sending your contributions in as soon as possible — perhaps before the crunch of finals in June.

inside english
The Journal of the
English Council of
California Two-Year Colleges

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"REviews"

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"Sacramento Scene"

Advertising Editor
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inside english is published four times a year: September, December, March, and June.

i.e. welcomes writing of interest to instructors of English in California two-year colleges. Send submissions and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

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inside english
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1900 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(213) 450-5150, ext. 258

i.e. offers individual subscriptions at $5.00/year and commercial subscriptions at $20.00/year.

inside english is printed by Los Angeles Trade-Technical College Printing Department.

Inside english Deadlines

June 1981 issue
Friday, 24 April 1981

September 1981 issue
Friday, 26 June 1981

December 1981 issue
Friday, 23 October 1981

Letters

WHO'S A PROFESSIONAL?

Dear editor:

Kevin Ryan may be correct with his comments on the need to modify Roger Garrison's method for teaching writing ["The Professional vs the College Writer," *i.e.*, Dec. 1980, p. 3], but Ryan misses the mark when he says the beginning college writer faces a task different from the beginning professional writer.

If you define a professional writer as someone who earns his living by writing, then the "professional" described by my colleague is an extremely rare creature. His "professional will always write on something in his field of expertise," but the professionals in the real world write what editors want, just as students try to give composition teachers what the teachers want. Like the student, the professional finds he must become a competent researcher to gain the needed expertise to write on numerous topics.

Few writers earn their living "writing solely on topics of personal interest." They write what editors are buying, or they fall from the ranks of professionals. Just as the competent student learn what each teacher wants, a professional writer analyzes his market and modifies his style to suit the publication he aims his story or article toward.

Both professional and college writers must meet deadlines. The idea that "the professional has (or makes) the time to revise over and over" does not fit reality. Pro writers, like good essay test takers, produce readable first drafts. In the newspaper business, for example, the stories are almost all first draft efforts. You don't have time to dally with rewrites when you are racing the clock.

And, as for *Time* magazine asking "A professional writer like Isaac Asimov to write a feature essay on the Soviet grain embargo," that admittedly is unlikely. *Time* is staff written. Asimov, however, probably would jump at such an assignment, if he was offered an attractive fee. He certainly has written about everything else, so becoming an expert on the Soviet grain embargo undoubtedly would be a challenge he could quickly and easily meet.

Asimov is a perfect example of the professional writer. He happily writes as an expert on science, Shakespeare, or Sherlock Holmes at the drop of a hint from an editor. He writes fact or fiction.

Even those who write exclusively in the field of fiction may find that they must write what the market demands if they are to earn a living. Not all fiction writers have the success of Ernest Hemingway — or Harold Robbins. Successful, serious writers like John Marquand have had to turn out Mr. Moto stories and some, like Conan Doyle, found what sold best was not what they **wanted** to write but **had** to. Otherwise, Sherlock Holmes' career would have been shorter.

In summary, then, the professional writer does not always have the choice of writing only what he wants about topics on which he is an expert — with all the time in the world to revise. The professional writer, in other words, has the attitudes and skills we hope our composition students can attain.

CHARLES DONALDSON
Santa Monica College

Kevin Ryan Responds:

A reply to the above letter by my colleague Charlie Donaldson will be quite simple, for the whole problem is merely a case of mistaken identity and a few sentences read out of context.

It seems that Charlie misses the mark in my fourth paragraph where I state that a "professional will always write on something in his field of expertise." I was merely taking up Roger Garrison's definition of a professional writer, which I stated in my introductory paragraph: "Garrison advocates teaching beginning college writers in the same manner that professional writers learn: by self-instruction, writing solely on topics of personal interest with the guidance of an editor (the teacher)."

As it turns out, Charlie and I are almost in complete agreement. He says that "Few writers earn their living 'writing solely on topics of personal interest.' " I agree. And I don't see how there could be any confusion as to my position, for at the end of paragraph three, I ask the questions (the point of my article): "Will a Garrison-taught college writer be able to handle a topic that will be chosen for him, that he will not be thrilled about and that will require research? Furthermore, will he be able to handle an extemporaneous in-class essay exam?" I end paragraph four with: "The liberal education the college student opted to receive demands he be willing to . . . study fields he knows nothing about and may have had no previous interest in." Maybe I should have prefaced each reference to a professional writer with "according to Garrison," but I did not think it was necessary.

In my article I am not concerned with the true definition of the "professional writer." What I am concerned about are the writing habits (whether they're the habits of a professional writer, a non-professional writer, or a house painter) that Garrison would teach a beginning college writer. And on that topic, I think my views are clear.

Charlie does make a point concerning this subject, however, that I feel I must comment on before closing. He concludes by saying that "The professional writer . . . has the attitudes and skills we hope our composition students can attain." According to his definition of a professional writer, one of those skills is turning in "readable rough drafts." Charlie should add that this is a skill mainly employed by experienced writers, mostly journalists. (I'd like to add that some news articles are "readable rough drafts," and little more.) And students should employ this skill only for impromptu essay exams. They should fully understand that writing is rewriting, that the act of creating fluent prose is not a simple process.

Composition Made Easy

(Continued from Page 1)

of tires. That's really stupid. If those tires finally give out, how are you going to get to work?"

(That's enough examples of proof, illustration, or what have you. Again, the number and type of evidence submitted depends upon the audience, the time, and my mood.)

"What is in the Body?"

(The answer is obvious . . . examples, illustrations, proof, evidence, etc.)

"Excellent. Now for the tricky part of the question, 'How much proof do you need?' "

(There are three responses to this question: (a) as much as you have; (b) as much as is required to meet the requirements of the situation or assignment; (c) as much as you feel like.)

"Now, she's told him what she thinks of him, and she's given him the reasons for her opinion, right? What does she still have to do?

"Exactly, she has to wrap it up, to come to some sort of conclusion. She's got to show him she's finished.

"Jaw . . . urge, I've had it with you. One more stinking time you come home smelling like stale beer and I'm leaving. Do you understand that? I quit. You can get someone else to warm over your oatmeal.

"What was the Title?

"What was the Introduction?

"What proof did she submit?

"What was the Conclusion?

"Okay, your final requirement then is to put some numbers into the block labeled Body. Remind yourself in some way that the Body has as many proofs as are appropriate, so write in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., etc."

FIRST ASSIGNMENT:

"Now, for your first assignment."

(After the groans subside) "Here's the assignment. Select three editorials, magazine articles, or what have you and dissect them according to the requirements established by this chart. When you are taking apart the Body, number each separate proof or argument. Tear the item out of the paper, book, or magazine. Put your name on it and turn it in at the next class meeting. If it's not ready, or you're not here, I'll drop you from the class. I don't have time to waste on this and if you aren't interested in getting it done, we can forget you."

SECOND LESSON:

At the next class meeting I collect the papers and go on with the regular subject matter. For the ensuing class I use an opaque projector to review some of the dissected articles, items, or editorials in class. Good ones and bad ones are presented. There is usually time for two of each plus one of my own. Every local paper has a "Letters to the Editor" column. I select one of the least literate, most sincere and, usually, most emotional letters. This is done chiefly to reemphasize the claim that "this is the normal and natural way to write." It helps if the sample selected is ungrammatical, poorly punctuated, and filled with misspellings. It serves to exaggerate the concept of structure.

SECOND ASSIGNMENT:

"Here is your next assignment. You will write a paper of no more than two handwritten pages in length." (Sometimes this is a paper concerning any personal opinion or view, other times it concerns a didactic response to one of the issues presented in the introductory portion of the class I am teaching. The assignment, obviously, depends upon the class.)

"**Rule 2:** Every written assignment in this class will be divided into the four components indicated. In this paper you will, additionally, label those components and number your proofs in the body.

"There is a third rule to be followed. **Rule 3:** The word 'AND' is not permitted anywhere in the paper. Put another way, I will accept only simple sentences. Anyone who does not understand this part of the assignment may meet with me in room X at time X." (This is done for the few in each class who want or need the work, and I can work with them all at the same time.)

THIRD LESSON:

When these papers are returned, the vast majority of them meet the simple requirements specified. I spend little time correcting the mechanics except where the simple sentence demand has been violated. Other errors may be marked, and I do select three or four of the most common for classroom identification. Two of the better papers are put on the opaque projector for presentation. I want to have a chance to compliment, brag upon, and gloat over some successful responses. I use a rule of thumb in working over these papers. Compliments in the form of "Great" or "You've got it" must exceed the number of negative comments on each paper. Sometimes the best I can say is, "Okay, that's a start and you didn't die. Now on the next effort I want you to do . . .," and I limit my response to one or two specific directions.

For the remainder of this class I discuss using this same structure as the basis for responding to essay questions. It is an easy process which gets off to a good start because there is rarely anyone who can identify the "title" for an essay question. They try to abstract a title from the body of the the question and after a few strained efforts they enjoy discovering the title is, in fact, the question number. "What are you going to write about? Number 2, that's what. If the teacher can't understand another damned thing you write, he can at least be told, 'I am writing about Number 2!' "

The question is restated as the introduction, and it is recapitulated as the conclusion. As a consequence the students are shown that on an essay test, three of the four parts of the structure are provided by the teacher. Their task consists solely of writing the body, that is, of listing the proofs.

"**Rule 4:** In my class, every essay question will be divided into the four parts. There will be the question number. The question will be restated as an introduction. The body of the response will be your answer. A conclusion, that is, a statement indicating you are through with the question, will be written separately at the end." (This requirement is reinforced throughout the course with comments, not check marks or grades.)

FOURTH LESSON:

Finally, my directions for completing a term paper are distributed. These are in two parts. One is a sample of a student term paper complete with my written comments and corrections. The other is a series of directions concerning how to write a term paper. I will not reproduce all of the material in this manual, only the initial rules.

A Term Paper Always:

1. Is typewritten.
2. Is in a binder.
3. Has a title page.
4. Has a bibliography.
5. Is written in your own words.
6. Is written after you have read something.
7. Is annotated.

If any of the above is omitted, you do not have a term paper. You will receive an "F."

As a concluding remark, I tell my students, "All of your academic writing will be expository in nature. Follow this form in everthing. The only thing that will change is the amount of material, therefore, the length of the Body."

That is my four-step approach to teaching compostion. Some of my assumptions in utilizing this approach are obvious, but they deserve explicit attention because, due I think to their obvious nature, they are frequently overlooked.

ASSUMPTION 1: ENGLISH TEACHERS TRY TO DO TOO MUCH AT ONCE, AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, FAIL TO TO ANYTHING. Every red mark, every correction, every error identified is a slash at an already bloodied ego. I cannot change everything anyway, so why cause any more pain than necessary? I try to concentrate on correcting one or two problems at a time. At the same time I try to be complimentary about something. (And, sometimes, Lord love a rubber duck, that is the hardest part.)

ASSUMPTION 2: STUDENTS WANT TO LEARN BUT DON'T KNOW HOW. Terminology, attitude, approach, all obscure what the student is expected to do. Simple requirements, explicit directions, and a minimal reliance upon student understanding produce better results.

One of the paradoxes of education is that the simpler the concept to be learned, the more complex the terminology used. Ye gods, look at what a psychologist can do with "the acculturation process." Conversely, the more complex the concept, the simpler the terminology and symbol system involved, i.e. $E = MC^2$. I never mention "a thesis statement." The introduction simply represents the writer's point of view, his bias, or position.

ASSUMPTION 3: STUDENTS WANT TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES BUT THEY ARE AFRAID. They are afraid to be honest in their writing because they do not wish to be insulted, reviled, criticized, or ridiculed, especially about something important to them. They have learned the "safe" way to write is "blah." Never say anything you really think, believe, or feel. As a consequence, they write blah, and structure is not important to blah. Structure is only important when the thing being expressed is important.

Out of this mess my students come to realize I am trying to help them. Because of this realization, they attempt to improve, and most do. English teachers would probably be surprised to discover how many of their students perceive each assignment simply as an ego trip for the teacher. Each red mark is interpreted by the student as ego-gratification for the teacher.

ASSUMPTION 4: STUDENTS HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME DEALING WITH ONE IDEA AT A TIME. Simple sentences are more clear. Simple sentences eliminate many punctuation problems and requirements. Simple sentences allow students to concentrate on vocabulary rather than structure.

In closing, let me quickly admit, "I'm guilty." This approach is simplistic. This approach is dogmatic. My attitude is Pollyannish. I am crude. I am vulgar. I do derive tremendous personal satisfaction from putting on my show. In my own defense, my students do learn to write, perhaps not well, but clearly and honestly. But what the hell do you expect from outside English!

RESPONSES TO THE KISSLER REPORT

On Reading a Report of Retention and Transfer

By GERTRUDE S. FUJII
Los Angeles Valley College

A recent, much-publicized study of student retention and the transfer program between the University of California (UC) and the community colleges knells a doleful alarm that all is not well with the program. Prepared by a task force lead by Gerald R. Kissler of UCLA, the report, covering 1972 to 1978, makes some curious conclusions regarding the performance of transfer students from one segment to another and questions the quality of their academic preparation. The statistics are impressive and sobering; but before we succumb to the pained cries of the doomed and the chilling voice of the damning, I think we need to look objectively beyond just a series of conclusions based upon selected statistics.

SELECTIVE ENGINEERING OF STATISTICS

In all fairness, the report is concerned with transfer students classified as juniors during their first year at the university. (Figures in the study were not given for those who enter below the junior level, after having done preliminary work at a community college.) The report also notes that graduation rates for those high school students eligible to enter the university directly but who prefer to attend the two-year college and then transfer compare almost equally to those who begin as freshmen at the university, 72 per cent to 73 per cent respectively. By the same reasoning, graduation rates for students ineligible to enter the university but who transfer after community college work are 60 per cent as compared to 74 per cent for native freshmen. Obviously, the poorly prepared student is at a distinct disadvantage, but he could not have entered the university at all, had it not been for help from the two-year college. The observation also holds true for those who hold no high school diploma or for those who re-

turn to postsecondary education after prolonged absence. To them, the only entrance to the university is by way of the community college.

A recent statistical survey by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) of the transfer program between community colleges and the four-year institutions (Dorothy M. Knoell) shows the enrollment for credit of community college students at a staggering 1,047,167 in 1978. In contrast, according to the California Community and Junior College Association (March, 1979), the UC enrolled 126,000, and the California State University and Colleges (CSUC), 304,000 for the same year. This means that roughly six of every ten students in public postsecondary education are enrolled at community colleges.

Because a meticulous point-by-point analysis of the Kissler report has been made by Frank H. Young of the College of San Mateo, I shall not try to refute or justify the findings of the report. Relying upon such sources as CPEC, the State Department of Finance, and the National Center for Educational Statistics, Young has answered each of the statements with conclusions of his own, which often diverge from those made by Kissler. Young's findings are revealing, for upon the same subject of the transfer student, he shows significant and contradictory information.

LOWERED STUDENT PREPAREDNESS

My second observation is that the report reflects in all segments the problem of attrition and retention, which is directly traceable to inadequate preparation. Mastery of basic skills, especially in verbal communication and mathematical computation, does not seem to differ from one level to the next. When 50 per cent of entering freshmen at Berkeley and 60 per cent of entering students at Los Angeles Valley College need remediation in language skills, the percentage is comparable, even though the latter does not practice the scholastic selectivity that is allowed the university. The fact remains that both the higher achieving high school graduate and the community college entrant need remediation.

Anyone who has a high school diploma or who is over eighteen may enroll in a community college. This policy absolutely guarantees a wide range of academic backgrounds and objectives, necessitating imagination and flexibility among faculty and programs. However, students who indicate a baccalaureate degree as their objective are given remediation, if necessary, before they are allowed to take courses that, in content and practice, compare to those taught at the four-year institutions. Paraphrasing a popular commercial advertisement, "We try harder" because we start lower.

NEED FOR SPECIALIZED TEACHER TRAINING

The third area of concern is the question of adequate teacher training. During what John Lombardi once called the "golden years" of community college teaching in the late 1950's and early 1960's, instructors coming into this newly independent segment of higher education were thoroughly grounded in basic educational skills. Thus students, fortunate enough to study with them, were well prepared to complete their baccalaureate degrees at the four-year institutions.

In recent years, however, instructors, for example in English, have come directly from the teacher-training institutions armed with master's degrees and doctorates in literature and linguistics, but often with only a token knowledge of what they would be teaching — mainly remedial and composition courses. It is no wonder that their students who need these basic skills so desperately may not do well in later university work. In fact, often the very universities who complain about poorly prepared transfer students are the

ones who trained their teachers in the first place. Teaching at a two-year college, with its drop-outs, stop-outs, and lost-outs, along with its academic achievers and special career groups, requires special training and flexibility. The students deserve well qualified faculty to meet their needs.

PROLIFERATION OF REMEDIAL PROGRAMS

The fourth point that merits scrutiny is the proliferation of remedial programs. When the Master Plan for Higher Education was finally adopted in December, 1959, specific functions were divided among the three segments: the two-year college would have major responsibility for lower division work and vocational education; CSUC would offer the baccalaureate and master's program; and UC would be responsible for baccalaureate, professional, and doctoral programs, with a freshman enrollment limited to only the top 12½ per cent of high school graduates. Implicit in the hierarchy was the understanding that remedial programs would come under the two-year colleges.

Two changes are significant in recent years regarding this arrangement. First the role of the two-year college has expanded to include servicing community demands; it is now known as a community rather than a junior college. Second, remedial programs have now been instituted on almost all the campuses of the universities. Thus, many high school graduates with low threshold skills who normally would have prepared themselves at a two-year college are going directly into the four-year institutions, adding to their attrition woes.

While the community college does not claim complete proprietorship over the basic skills program, it would seem that the segment teaching this level for the longest time and developing methods and materials for it would be the logical one to assume this responsibility. Remedial programs at all levels seem to be a repetitive use of resources that may well be turned to better advantage in fields the community college cannot reach or serve.

SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Finally, knowing that hindsight is more readily attainable than foresight and that advising is easier than devising, I suggest some possible steps to ease the woeful situation in which higher education finds itself.

First, I would recommend a return to the concepts of the Master Plan to eliminate duplication of effort and program. Not all students enrolled in the two-year colleges are remedial. Many, eligible for admission to the university, attend community college for economic, personal, and academic reasons. These, of course, are the ones most likely to succeed in later university work. Students needing remediation, on the other hand, who wish to complete their baccalaureate would take longer to attain admission status. This extra time and training can easily be supplied by the already equipped community college.

The community college, on its part, must see that comparable course work is as rigorous as that taught in the university. A step in this direction is the passing of a resolution by the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges (ECCTYC) at their fall 1981 meeting, recommending that completion of the traditional freshman composition course be required of all transfer students to both the UC and CSUC, and that this course be the one to fulfill the general education requirement for writing at CSUC campuses.

Furthermore, faculty of the two-year colleges have one peculiar advantage over their cohorts in the four-year segments. Because career advancement does not necessarily depend upon publication or research, the instructor can concentrate upon teaching and personal conferences. He can research teaching material and give time to students without jeopardizing his academic standing in the departmental hierarchy. The personal interest and special help of a concerned faculty member is often the difference between a discouraged drop-out and a heartened stick-out.

Another observation is that special training is essential for the instructor — especially the English instructor — at the two-year level. In addition to knowledge in his special field, the instructor should be familiar with problems inherent in serving both vertical and horizontal divergences among the student population. He may well find in one class an academically oriented high school graduate and a mid-career fire fighter working toward advancement in his field.

(Continued on Page 8)

Examining Some Contentions of Kissler Report

[The following is a copy of Frank H. Young's analysis of the Kissler report, as directed to the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, and is printed as it originally appeared.]

The University of California Systemwide Task Group on Retention and Transfer, chaired by Gerald Kissler, has released some "findings" which are most uncomplimentary to the California Community College transfer function. Although some of the data presented in the Kissler Report are indeed worthy of sober reflection, the Report's convenient omission of relevant data and its frequent use of misleading comparisons make many of the Report's conclusions invalid or meaningless.

CONTENTION: A decline in academic performance of Community College transfers occurred during the early 1970's.

RESPONSE: Evidence does not support this contention. In its statewide follow-up study of the academic performance of 799 UC and 2,870 CSUC transferees from California Community Colleges, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) concluded that "the transfer students' performance may best be summarized by noting that about two-thirds in both segments (UC and CSUC) earned grade-point averages of 2.5 and above, 21 per cent earned averages of C and slightly above and the remainder (less than 15 per cent) had cumulative averages that were unsatisfactory at the time data collection ceased" (CPEC, 1979, p. 26). Clearly, the transfer students' academic performance was most satisfactory during the 1970's.

CONTENTION: Transfer education in community colleges is weaker because the community colleges have assumed a vocational orientation.

RESPONSE: Vocational education does not dominate transfer education in the community colleges. "Semester or student credit hours enrollment in the transfer courses tops enrollment in occupational courses by a wide margin" (Lombardi, 1978, p. 25). Nor does vocational education necessarily produce academically inferior students. Eells (1943) found that only 5 per cent of 2,080 JC graduates of "terminal" curricula who subsequently transferred to four-year institutions withdrew due to academic difficulty, and he also noted that the average senior institution GPA of these students exceeded their junior college GPA. More recently, Block (1970) and Stone (1975) found no significant difference between the academic performance and persistence at senior institutions of "occupational" and "academic" community college graduates.

CONTENTION: The transfer function has become less important because the number of transfer students has declined.

RESPONSE: The important consideration is the percentage not the number of UC and CSUC undergraduates who are transfer students. CPEC (1978) reported that transfer students, most of whom are juniors, constituted 19.2 per cent of CSUC and 13.1 per cent of UC Fall 1977 total undergraduate enrollments. By way of comparison, the Fall 1979 CSUC and UC junior classes constituted only 23 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, of total undergraduate enrollments (Department of Finance, 1979). Furthermore, "two-thirds of CSUC graduates have completed course work in the California Community Colleges" (Fernandez, 1980).

Perhaps more enlightening are the findings of an extensive study performed for the American Council on Education which revealed that 52 per cent of 1968 first-time, full-time, two-year college students had transferred to a four-year college by 1972 (Holstrom and Bisconti, 1974).

CONTENTION: High school graduates now strongly prefer to enroll directly into four-year institutions rather than transfer from community colleges.

RESPONSE: A National Center for Education Statistics (1976, p. 77) survey of the plans of high school seniors found that 30 per cent of these students planned to attend a two-year college and then transfer to a four-year institution. Only 22 per cent planned to enroll directly into a senior institution.

CONTENTION: In 1976 and 1977, the number of well-prepared community college transfers to UC had declined.

RESPONSE: No specifics are given. Perhaps the remark alludes to the general decline in students' reading, writing, and mathematics skills, a decline which is permeating ALL levels of education, including the University of California.

CONTENTION: Transfer students suffer a significant drop in GPA during their first term after transfer.

RESPONSE: This phenomenon of "transfer shock" has been well documented ever since the famous Knoell and Medsker study (1965). What Knoell and Medsker emphasized (and what the Kissler Report conveniently omits), however, is that the difference in "native" and "transfer" student GPA tends to disappear by the time of graduation (see, for example, the Moughamian et al. (1978) study of the senior institution academic performance of 10,500 transfer students).

CONTENTION: Transfer students do not do as well as "native" students who entered the UC system as freshmen from high school and persisted to the junior year. The transfer students earn lower GPA's, suffer higher attrition, are more often on probation, and take longer to complete degree requirements.

RESPONSE: This is the favorite "apples and oranges" comparison made by those who expound upon the academic "inferiority" of transfer students. UC enrolls the academic top 12.5 per cent of high school graduates, many of whom never make it to the junior year (UC systemwide enrollment figures show 24,107 freshmen in 1978 but only 19,518 sophomores in 1979, a decline of 19 per cent. Ref: Department of Finance, 1979, 1980). The academic performance of these elite survivors is then "compared" with that of the transfer students, *55 per cent of whom were originally ineligible for admission to the University as high school graduates* (University of California, 1978). But originally-eligible and originally-ineligible students differ in academic ability. Consequently, the *only valid comparison* is that between native students and originally-eligible transfer students. CPEC (1979) reported that originally-eligible community college transfers to UC campuses in 1977-78 compiled an average GPA of 2.88, an average which compares most favorably with the 2.85 GPA earned by first-time UC freshmen in Fall 1977. Even the Kissler Report admits that "those students who were eligible for admission to the University of California from high school but chose first to attend a Community College have always done well." Perhaps the Report should also acknowledge the large number of students "salvaged" for University education by the California Community Colleges.

One final thought: It would be a mistake to dismiss ALL the "findings" of the Kissler Report. Certainly the Report's contention that "the gap between the performance of Community College transfers and (UC) native freshmen who become juniors is increasing" should encourage each community college to continually assess the efficacy of its transfer function. However, the evidence to date overwhelmingly supports CPEC's (1979) conclusion that "the transfer function is still significant in the California Community Colleges" (p. 36). Lombardi (1978) warns that "it would be a serious mistake for the community college to adopt a benign neglect of the transfer function" (p. 27). Students still aspire for the baccalaureate degree; vocational students still need the liberal arts courses embedded in the transfer curriculum if they are to have a realistic chance for career advancement; and, the promise of upward mobility for the disadvantaged can only have meaning if they are offered both transfer and occupational programs.

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News from Our Regions

REGION I: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Directors: Ken Cooney, Shasta College; Gordon Taylor, Yuba College.

Joe Fitschen (Lassen College) resigned as ECCTYC Director from Region I, and Ken Cooney, Chair of Language at Shasta College, was elected to take his place.

REGION III: SAN FRANCISCO SOUTHERN BAY AND MONTEREY

Directors: John Lovas, DeAnza College; Dick Lundquist, Cabrillo College.

James Fetler, instructor at Foothill College, received the 1980 Short Fiction Award from the Iowa School of Letters, University of Iowa's respected creative writing program, for his collection of short stories entitled *Impossible Appetites*. [A review of this book will appear in the June 1981 *i.e.*]

REGION VII: NORTH LOS ANGELES

Directors: Sister Joseph Adele Edwards, Mount St. Mary's College; Leonard Franco, Pasadena City College.

On 2 December 1980 the English department chairs of Region VII met at Pasadena City College. In the absence of Sister Joseph Adele Edwards, Len Franco acted as chairperson. Possible topics for the statewide meeting to be held in San Francisco in November 1981 were discussed.

Barbara Bilson (Santa Monica College) was elected in December to serve a three-year term as a member of the Delegate Assembly of the Modern Language Association.

Rae Jeane Popham (Santa Monica College) helped coordinate the 1980 Chancellor's Conference on Composition held 6 December 1980 at the University of California, Los Angeles. Two community college English instructors gave presentations — Stephen Montgomery (El Camino College), "The Idea of a Writing Center" and Barbara Bilson, "Rescue, Reject, or Remediate: What Should the Community College Do?" — and numerous members of community college English departments participated in the all-day conference.

REGION IX: SAN BERNARDINO

Directors: Jack Mitchell, San Bernardino Valley College; James Moore, Mt. San Antonio College.

Mt. San Antonio College hosted its annual Writers Day Festival, 28 February 1981. Jim Moore, Chair of English at Mt. SAC, coordinated the Festival. The participants heard discussions on various types of writing — fiction (juvenile, mainstream, scifi, fantasy), play and TV scripts, journalism, biography, poetry — by experts in the field. Among those attending were Ray Bradbury, Art Seidenbaum, Luis Valdez, Michele Gallery, John Weston.

Judy Hert (San Bernardino Valley College) is acting as a consultant for an NEH grant written by the American Association of Junior and Community Colleges to encourage interdisciplinary work between the humanities and the vocations. At a four day conference sponsored by the NEH and held in Los Angeles in February, Judy assisted the teams (composed of a dean, an humanities instructor, and a vocational instructor) from Sacramento City College and from Los Angeles City College in preparing their projects.

REGION X: SAN DIEGO

Directors: Ann Clutinger, San Diego Mesa College; Elaine McLevie, Grossmont College.

At the Fall conference held Friday, 5 December 1980, at Grossmont College, Shirley Sykes, from San Diego Mesa College — Evening, was elected regional director for the term beginning 1 July 1981, replacing Ann Clutinger.

Evening Student: Jogger At Eighty

Skinny as 1, around and around in ciphers,
He runs through millions, this dizzy heir,
Rebuffing time and distance like an early Stare
That slowly looked an Eden into space.
Tethered to strength unseen, like an evening spider,
This ancient man, slapping youth from age,
Delivers himself from self, the boy replaced,
And spins through rings, and sweats, a lasting fighter.

A film of Dante run at Chaplin speed,
He's giddy on circles, delights in heat like a clown.
Flashing, in his own applause, he pummels the ground.
At last he walks, hoards his privacy.
His toughness shines; he's leathery, sword swallower
Slick, lean as a throat. He gulps new air.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

An ECCTYC Perspective

What has ECCTYC been doing this past year? Because we work quietly, not seeking publicity for our activities, English instructors frequently are unaware of the scope of our activities, both professional and political. At the urging of a number of my colleagues, I want to devote this column to informing you of at least some of the areas in which our members are involved.

The ECCTYC Board of Directors has established an on-going liaison with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC). Our immediate past-president, Dr. Gertrude Fujii (LA Valley), is our liaison with that group, attending their meetings as a representative of ECCTYC. At the ASCCC last October in Los Angeles, she served as our official representative, joined by ECCTYC Board members Julie Hatoff (Mira Costa) and Joe Fitschen (Lassen), both of whom were representing their campus Academic Senates. The ASCCC has appointed one of their Board members (Edith Conn of Ventura) as liaison representative to our meetings.

Recently, the ECCTYC Board established a Load/Differential Committee, headed by Bob Mognis (Modesto). This committee is charged with studying inequities throughout the state and providing assistance to individual districts with problems of load. The committee will serve as a clearinghouse for information/materials that will assist English instructors who are attempting to bring their district into line with general practices throughout the state. [See *inside english*, December 1980, p. 2, for more details. Direct inquiries to Robert Mognis, Chair, Literature and Language Arts Division, Modesto Junior College, Modesto, CA, 95350.]

Our organization is continuing to maintain close liaison with the State legislature.

A smooth transition was accomplished when this position was transferred to Gordon Taylor (Yuba). He maintains a close watch on legislative activities and secures information on bills affecting education currently under consideration; he then reports to us through his column, "Sacramento Scene."

Three of our members are serving on legislatively mandated statewide committees under the direct auspices of the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC). Gertrude Fujii is a member of the Intersegmental Writing Skills Committee; Ann Clutinger (San Diego Mesa) is a member of the Basic Skills Committee; and Jim Cagnacci serves on the "Blue Ribbon" Committee on Writing Skills/Standards.

Additionally, we have maintained close liaison with the University of California (UC) and California State University and Colleges (CSUC) English Councils, our equivalents at these two segments of higher education. Not only has the policy of meeting jointly with these groups been continued, but also we have named specific liaison agents to these councils: Marlene Griffith (Laney) as liaison to the UC English Council and John Lovas (De Anza) to the CSUC English Council. A system has been developed with the CSUC Chancellor's Office that allows ECCTYC to appoint one of its members to the Literacy Requirements Committees of individual state colleges. Presently, seven ECCTYC members serve on committees at their local state colleges: Les Boston (LA Valley) at Northridge, Kevin Burns (Long Beach City) at Long Beach, Jim Cagnacci at San Francisco, Ted Stevenson (San Diego Mesa) at San Diego, and Bert Woodruff (Fresno City) at Fresno. We hope to conclude arrangements with several additional campuses.

Because of ever-increasing emphasis on ESL instruction at our campuses, the ECCTYC Board has initiated steps to establish formal liaison with the California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL) organization. A letter to that effect has been sent to Dr. Clifford Rodriques, current president of CATESOL. Our hope is that a strong and effective relationship between our organizations can be developed, utilizing the expertise of both groups. We intend to appoint Dick McIntosh (Cypress), chair of our ESL Committee, our liaison representative.

An ECCTYC representative has been given a seat on the California Writing Projects Advisory Committee. This year Jim Cagnacci was appointed to that committee. We are also attempting to establish a liaison with the State of California's English Liaison Committee, a subcommittee of the Commission on Higher Education for the State of California.

Judy Hert (San Bernardino Valley) and Barbara Bilson (Santa Monica) have begun a series of invitational workshops, entitled Workshop for Research and Innovation in Composition. The first such workshop was held for the southern regions at Cypress College on 17 October 1980, and it proved most successful. In fact, five articles in *inside english* for December 1980, were products of that workshop. The second workshop, for the northern regions, is scheduled on 13 March 1981 at De Anza College.

Our hardworking secretary, Bill Decker (College of the Sequoias) is presently compiling a statewide directory of English department chairs/contacts for each California community college; this directory will contain names, addresses, and telephone numbers and should, therefore, prove invaluable to all of us.

Under the masterful direction of Gertrude Fujii, ECCTYC has finally completed every step of the process necessary for incorporation. As you well know, in this present day world incorporation is a necessity for any large professional organization.

The ECCTYC Board has already developed plans for an invitational state con-

(Continued on Page 8)

\$ACRAMENTO \$CENE

The Name of the Game Is Wait and See

By GORDON TAYLOR
Yuba College

The word in Sacramento is **gloom**. The governor's message was gloomy. The financial picture is gloomy. The Scene, however, looks about the same as ever. The people there seem as they usually do: not exactly cheery, but going about their business as though it were pretty much as usual, attempting to keep things afloat (nautically speaking, that is) in spite of the usual inflation and the somewhat unusual shortage of money to pay for it.

Everybody is saying it: the State's surplus is almost gone, and now we must prepare for the periods of great austerity that will surely follow. And, of course, if everyone says it, surely it is true. The first part is obviously true; the surplus is being used up. The second part is not so obviously so; once we adjust to operating within the annual budget, some say that the normal increases in revenue will keep the State running, that the great crunch will be for 1981-82 only (see FACCCTS, December 1980, p.3). In any case, it seems safe to say that the State's government will be a mite smaller in the future than it is now, although that seems hard to imagine given its proclivities to grow and extend its influence.

No doubt most people are familiar with the main points of the Governor's proposed budget. As it relates to the community colleges, it allocates \$919.3 million, down from the current \$1.3 billion. The amount was arrived at by using the formulas in the current law and then subtracting \$10 million "to accommodate current fiscal restraints." It proposes no increases of any kind to any fund or categorical program unless some adjustment is required by present laws. It does contain, however, \$8.1 million for deferred maintenance and special repairs, \$3 million of which comes from the one-time, unsecured revenue from the property tax (referred to in "Sacramento Scene," *i.e.*, December 1980, p.7). Chancellor Jerry Hayward anticipates a difficult budget session for the community colleges and notes that we will be competing with other agencies. This session, he says, "will require a high level of knowledge and interest by all community college interest groups and organizations."

The Chancellor's Office has a package of bills to introduce that it hopes will takes the place of AB 8, which expires in June. The package will be sponsored in the Senate by Alfred Alquist, chairman of the Senate's Finance Committee; a sponsor in the Assembly has not as yet been determined. The bills will be introduced in the first part of February; the legislative committees will have to wait the required thirty days before they begin to hear them and, likely, will not pass them on to the legislature until well into March or April. It is easy to foresee the usual delay that the schools have to suffer each year before they know what their financial status is. If the past is any hint of the future, it will be well into the summer before the legislature finishes its work on the schools.

The bills are intended to cover the two major types of expenses: operations and capital outlay. The first part (four articles) covers general funding, categorical funding, appropriations, and attendance accounting; the second (eight articles), general provisions and definitions, planning and evaluation procedure, major construction projects, maintenance, equipment replacement, remodelling, appropriations, and external funding. Although these proposals are comprehensive and detailed, it is too early to be worth going into their details.

The Chancellor's Office will also attempt to get some kind of parity for the community colleges with the K-12 districts and the universities, including 8 to 9 per cent for inflation, a 2 per cent factor for growth, 1 to 2 per cent for equity funding (to compensate for the different sizes of community college districts) for a total of 11 to 13 per cent. Will the CC's get it all? We shall, of course, see.

Some other items of more specific interest:

— In June 1980, the California Postsecondary Education Commission's (CPEC) Policy Evaluation Committee (PEC) directed the Intersegmental Committee on Writing Skills (ICWS) (got all those?) to form a special Blue Ribbon Subcommittee (BRSWS) of composition teachers "from all levels and segments of California Education [sic]" to write a statement "of those minimum proficiencies that a student must possess before enrolling in the transfer-level freshman composition course offered in each public college or university in the State." On 27 October 1980, the ICWS endorsed the BRSWS's statement, and on 15 December 1980, the PEC approved it and presented it to CPEC. On 19 January 1981, CPEC adopted the standard and resolved to send it to the State Department of Education and recommended that it be sent to the various academic senates, "the English councils, and to any other appropriate bodies, for comment" and asked that "the segments report back to the Commission with their comments on the Statewide standard by June 1, 1981." The pertinent part of the standard reads: "A student who is admitted to the transfer-level freshman composition course should be able to write essays showing adequacy in the following: 1) selection of a controlling idea appropriate to the given writing task; 2) the coherent development of that idea to a reasoned conclusion; 3) use of sentences that demonstrate some structural variety and that contain language appropriate to the audience and the purpose; and 4) control of the conventions of standard written English (relative freedom from such errors as fragments, run-together sentences, faulty agreement, and improper pronoun reference) and of mechanics (capitalization, spelling, and punctuation)." Ah, yes, there is nothing like a bit of bureaucratic prose, acronyms and all, to brighten one's day; and, if experience serves, we should have a statewide standard or a statewide non-standard within three or four years.

— A new bill, AB 507, took effect on 1 January 1981 and revises the bilingual programs. It says that the programs are to lead the student to English, to provide more instruction in English as the student progresses; and it increases the number of bilingual classes. Students may now, however, through a specified method, leave the program. The bill also mandates a bilingual program when there are twenty or more students whose native language, other than English, is the same. Also, as I write, I am told that some new policies regarding bilingual education are coming out of Washington.

No doubt, by the time you read this in March, many of the details will have changed, but things should be more fixed for the following issue.

Reading a Report

(Continued from Page 4)

No longer is just a master's degree or a doctorate sufficient to meet the requirement of this fascinating student mixture.

Still another observation is that pooling of experience and knowledge, especially in the area of basic skills, could eliminate duplication of time and resources. The two-year college faculties have been teaching basic skills long before "basic" became a front-page word, and, consequently, have developed learning centers and teaching techniques that may well be shared with other segments. The wheel of remediation has been reinvented time and time again, but, with the addition of a few

spokes perhaps, its shape and function remain essentially unchanged. The community college instructor can share his experience; the university professor can share his research on the art and science of the learning process. Much can be accomplished to provide opportunities for both native and transplants who need extra help.

Another suggestion is that the four-year institutions consider returning to the semester schedule. Kissler's report documents the fact that students are taking longer to graduate. Perhaps one quarter is not enough for them to learn all they need to know. Students at all levels may benefit from the longer learning time. The semester system would also then correlate with secondary schools and most community colleges.

Finally, doubt-casting to the contrary, much progress in the relationship between the segments has been made. I am thinking particulary of the English discipline which, through its three English Councils — UC, CSUC, and ECCTYC — has been able to consult and mutually benefit. For example, when the campuses of CSUC were mandated to develop a third-year level writing proficiency test, their English Council agreed to have community college English representatives sitting on their campus-wide test committees, especially since two-thirds of the transfer students attend a CSUC campus. In the case of UC, teaching intern programs have been initiated between their English departments and those of two-year colleges, so that masters and doctoral condidates interested in teaching at the two-year level would have practical experience interning under experienced master teachers.

These, then, consititute my suggestions for the retention of students and improvement in the transfer program: a return to the concepts of the Master Plan, more specialized training for instructors, pooling of experience and resources, and a return to the semester schedule.

The community college has been and should continue to be an integral part of higher education. It provides higher education for the lower educated, and in so doing, performs a crucial service to those to whom the university door would be barred, were it not for the open door of the community college.

President's Message

(Continued from Page 7)

ference to be held at the San Francisco Drake Hotel in November 1981. Heading the committee on physical arrangements and catering are Don Snepp (CCSF) and Jim Cagnacci. Responsibility for the program is in the hands of Marlene Griffith and John Lovas. John Callen (CCSF) will be handling publicity and reservations. Working as needed with all these people will be Jack Gill (College of San Mateo).

Though I have made a point of some of our liaison work, I have done so because our various involvements are relatively new endeavors. I assure you that we are continuing to work with other agencies and professional groups. Judy Hert is our liaison with the Educational Testing Service and with the CSUC Testing Program; she also serves as our liaison to the Community College State Board of Governors. Gertrude Fujii continues to provide liaison with the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges. Our contact with the private colleges and universities is Sister Joseph Adele Edwards (Mount St. Mary's). Bill Decker continues to provide liaison with major professional organizations, such as the Modern Language Association, National Council of Teachers of English, CATE, and the Pacific Coast Regional Conference. We also have a number of very active committees in addition to the ones I have mentioned: Literature and Humanities, chaired by Jack Gill; Publications, chaired by Barbara Bilson; Composition, chaired by Dick Lundquist (Cabrillo); Basic Skills, chaired by Ann Clutinger; Grants, chaired by Gertrude Fujii; and Budget/Finances, chaired by John Coates (Orange Coast).

Last but not least, there is the major star in our crown: *inside english*. Without a doubt this is one of the best professional journals in existence and one of the most popular. Major, if not sole, credit for the success of this publication must go to Barbara Bilson, editor of the journal. She is a tireless worker, an expert editor, a true professional. Because of the excellence of her publication, we have achieved the recognition, politically and professionally, that we now enjoy.

I hope that this listing of our activities has not been a tiresome repetition of items you already know, but rather that it serves to inform you of the multiple areas of concern to your ECCTYC Board and of the variety of activities in which ECCTYC is representing you.

JIM CAGNACCI
City College of San Francisco

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
UPDATE:

Focus: A College English Handbook
Kim Flachmann
California State College, Bakersfield
432 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual
Just published

Flachmann's developmental handbook closely integrates writing and reading. Interdisciplinary textbook selections in each unit provide examples of writing skill applications and serve as bases for reading skill exercises.

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Charles Bazerman
Baruch College, City University of New York
360 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual
Just published

Bazerman's text prompts students to interact with what they read in order to produce writing that's both well informed and original. Teaching skills of reading, analyzing, and synthesizing source material, Bazerman shows students *how* to develop content and articulate their own thoughts in relation to the ideas of others.

The text moves step by step from paraphrase and summary through various kinds of analytic writing to the creative research paper. Many interdisciplinary examples of student and professional writing plus specific writing assignments illustrate and reinforce the skills taught.

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Joseph Trimmer, Ball State University
Maxine Hairston, University of Texas at Austin
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ENGLISH COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA ECCTYC TWO YEAR COLLEGES

inside english

Vol. VII, No. 4 | Journal of the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges | June 1981

INSIDE *inside english*

ECCTYC Looks at Literature

Do we demand less of our literature students now than our colleagues did fifty years ago? What changes in teaching literature have occurred between then and now? Two studies provide some interesting data and lead, perhaps, to some disturbing conclusions. page 3

According to Gary Hoffman, film IS a form of literature—and he sets out to prove it. page 4

Can we be TWO-year colleges when our students usually take longer than two years to complete their studies? page 5

Donald Pratt presents a "method of teaching science so simple even a paleomicrobiologist can understand it." page 5

Santa Barbara City College's English Department held a series of workshops that, according to Evanne Jardin, have helped to create a community of colleagues. page 5

★

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Upstate/Downstate ..... page 8

What Do We Do About Literature?

By JOHN C. LOVAS
De Anza College

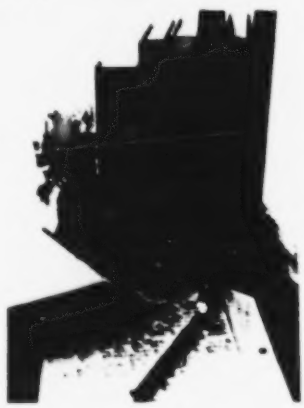
FOR A COUPLE of years now, the De Anza English Department has expressed serious concern about the state of the literature program. We have made a number of efforts to attract students and stabilize enrollments: retitled courses, minimized schedule conflicts between literature courses, scheduled only in prime time, published expanded course descriptions emphasizing the relevance and accessibility of the literature. Some of these efforts had modest effects, but overall the literature enrollments continue to be thin, some of them downright unhealthy. A year ago, two faculty members, Nell Sullivan and Gary Cummings, proposed an entire restructuring of the literature curriculum: much of their proposal was bold, thought-provoking, imaginative. Most of us had moderate to serious reservations about the proposal. We discussed it and possible modifications at two meetings. This fall, in the context of the General Education requirements revision, we proposed a single, introductory course in literature to serve as a primary General Education course. However, except for the cosmetic changes mentioned in my second sentence, we haven't done anything yet. In fact, our approach to this problem has, so far, been hit-and-miss, lacking in commitment, full of wishful thinking and self-pity.

We manifest all of this in our meetings with two identifiable attitudes: (1) sarcasm and cynicism and (2) hopeful desperation. After much reflection, I think those two attitudes are based on two underlying assumptions, beliefs, fears: (1) the study of literature is dead; or, (2) the study of literature is dying. As a consequence, those of the first attitude figure whatever we do about the literature curriculum is doomed whereas those of the second attitude want to do something, if only to insure that the program goes to its grave in dignity. Ironically, we are having great difficulty doing ourselves what we manage to teach our students: carefully observe, record, analyze, and organize a set of facts so that a problem is clearly stated and possible solutions are identified. For what it's worth, we are not alone. What I hear in conversations with other department chairs and what I read in the professional journals indicate that declines both in literature enrollments and in faculty morale are widespread. But those who have written on the subject have some useful things to say, notions that may help us confront our concerns.

In *Profession 80*, an MLA publication, J. Paul Hunter, former English Department chairman at Emory University, opens his essay "Facing the Eighties" this way:

> The future is not really my area of specialization, but even someone with credentials in prophecy, astrology, and palmistry would surely be intimidated today by having to forecast the next decade in institutions of higher learning . . . . I have no easy answers to offer, I do have some things to say about our professional ideals and the way we apply them to specific situations, for whatever surprises the eighties bring, the key to our survival will surely lie in how comfortably we are able to bring to bear on those situations some of the ideals we have inherited from centuries of humanistic thought (p. 1).

Hunter's entire article is worth reading, but as a backdrop to some of my analyses and suggestions, I'd like to quote Hunter extensively. (The headings are my additions):



On Composition as a Way Out

> All is not, however, sweetness and light—or enrollment and FTE—in contemplating the Joy of Composition, and any euphoria about writing clinics as eternal redemption centers needs to be grounded in some basic psychological realities and historical remembrances. For all its conservatism, the academy is prone to faddism, and faddism of the worst possible sort—the sort that catches onto trends late and picks up momentum even as the reasons for their inception disappear and metamorphose into altogether new needs. One other note of caution about too heavy a dependence on writing courses: we must be prepared for the inevitable disillusionment of our colleagues when they discover (again) that heroic efforts to rescue literacy as a phenomenon do not, after all, give them classrooms full of sophomore silk purses (p. 2).

Rethinking Traditional Courses

> Another kind of curricular innovation I want to talk about is one we have not had much luck with in the seventies; it involves the individual writers. The configuration of courses in most English departments today looks so familiar to most of us that we can scarcely imagine a different one without imagining a wholly different set of curricular assumptions and values. But there may be different ways of approaching the goals implicit in traditional humanist values, and I would hope that in the eighties we might explore some alternative methods of presenting to our students the several great traditions that make up our heritage (p. 5).

Who Is the Student? Who Should Teach?

> The fact that we are now teaching future doctors and lawyers and farmers and computer designers and labor negotiators, rather than minions of ourselves who will perpetuate a shrinking circle, ought to exhilarate rather than depress us, but it does mean that we may have to think differently about the way we ask students to come to us for our expertise. And it is precisely those members of the profession who are suspicious of frill courses and gimmicks who ought to organize and teach in new structures, for they will know the distinctions that need to be made, the questions that need to be addressed, and the substance that needs to be preserved and made manifest (p. 6).

The Problem of Attitude

> A theme that has been running through my essay involves academic attitudes: the tendency to resist change, even when it involves only the reconstruing of cherished beliefs or the repackaging of truths that we want to be self-eloquent in the forms familiar to us. If the academic world is to survive at all, in any recognizable form, into the twenty-first century, the reasons will surely be that we have found a way to channel our rich humanistic heritage, to house our best ideals, to ground our highest principles in the developing realities of a world changing, a world adjusting to non-expansion of population and economy, diminished energy resources, and a lessened sense of expectation (p. 7).

Hunter's emphasis on the role academic attitudes play in preventing u from making effective change make sense to me. However, those situatior

(Continued on Page 8)

Notices

WRITERS FOR *i.e.*

In December we also hope to begin a new regular column (how regular depends on YOU) called "What I Did When . . ." This column will be where you will share with your colleagues how you solved a particular teaching problem or handled a specific situation. Such a brief discussion might show what you did the first day of the semester in your Introduction to Literature class; or you might demonstrate how you began the poetry section to a seemingly recalcitrant class.

i.e. reflects what YOU indicate that you are interested in. YOU ARE *i.e.* (Anyone interested in an *i.e.* stylesheet may write to the editor. SASE.)

inside english
The Journal of the
English Council of
California Two-Year Colleges

Barbara Bilson ..... Editor

Contributing Editors
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"Reviews"
Gordon Taylor
"Sacramento Scene"

Advertising Editor
Jim Moore

inside english is published four times a year: September, December, March, and June.

i.e. welcomes writing of interest to instructors of English in California two-year colleges. Send submissions and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Barbara Bilson, Editor
inside english
Santa Monica College
1900 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(213) 450-5150, ext. 258

i.e. offers individual subscriptions at $5.00/year and commercial subscriptions at $20.00/year.

inside english is printed by Los Angeles Trade-Technical College Printing Department.

inside english Deadlines

September 1981 issue
Friday, 26 June 1981

December 1981 issue
Friday, 23 October 1981

March 1982 issue
Friday, 29 January 1982

SACRAMENTO SCENE *(Continued from Page 7)*

fees for services that it renders to students. A technical problem in the bill is that the B of G does not render services directly to students, but the author's intent, apparently, is to authorize districts to charge tuition if they wish to and to deter what is referred to as frivolous enrollments. 2) AB 1994 (Konnyu) would authorize charging each student a registration fee of $25.00 per semester. The revenue would have to be spent at the college or facility where the student is enrolled, although the district could retain a portion for its administrative costs. If this bill were enacted, the 700,000 students would pay around $35,000,000, and the State would reduce its allocations accordingly. Some analysts see this fee as a first step toward a tuition, as well. 3) SB 890 (O'Keefe) would allow a student body organization to impose a fee not to exceed $5.00 for specified purposes.

—SB 429 (Speraw) would include "salaries of student service employees" (instructors, instructional aides, librarians, librarians' aides, counselors, counselors' aides, and some other certificated employees) in computing the 50 per cent of the budget spent on education.

—According to AB 175 (Hannigan), the Employment Development Department could pay for projects under the California Work-Site Education and Training Act of 1979, a move that could exclude the CC's from participating in local contracts under the CWETA.

The CCC Chancellor's Office is asking for $1.09 billion for the next fiscal year, an increase of 9.7 per cent. It is also sponsoring eleven bills. Among them: 1) the main bill, SB 842 (Alquist), is the major finance bill (the basis of which I reported on last time) and would replace AB 8 under which we now operate. 2) SB 841 (Alquist) is a funding bill to provide actual cash, but it is really a spot bill (it reserves a spot on the legislative calendar) that appropriates money to the CC's for the fiscal year 1981-82 in amounts to be specified later. Hearings are now under way on these bills, and they should get to the full legislature during the first or second week of May. 3) SB 936 (Stiern) deals with construction, repair, and maintenance and raises the amount of money that districts can spend before getting the State's approval.

Other items: AB 1149 would authorize CC districts to seek approval for a flexible calendar directly from the Chancellor's Office. AB 1726, AB 1729, and AB 1730 would streamline the Education Code. There are bills that would index the State's income taxes; allow tax credits to citizens, businesses, and industries; allow exemptions to the income tax for interest, dividends, heating and fuel bills.

Republican leaders in the Assembly are proposing changes in the tenure laws and linking their proposals to the schools' financing bills. They want to raise the levels of the teachers' competence, overhaul the seniority system so that districts can retain the competent teachers and not the merely old ones, change the disciplinary processes, change provisions in the collective bargaining laws to give districts more discretion over what is negotiable, streamline the current processes for fair hearing that would give districts a bit more power than they now have in dismissing a teacher; and they want to improve retirement benefits with a 4 per cent increase across the board in addition to the usual 2 per cent annual increase.

An interesting tid bit: U. S. Senator S. I. Hayakawa wants to get an amendment to the U. S. Constitution passed that would establish English as the official language of the United States. It would, in effect, prevent the use of any language other than English for official purposes.

LINGUISTIC GEM OF THE MONTH: A federal agency exists that actually calls itself the U. S. Commission on Radiation Protection.

Letters

A NEW VENTURE

Dear Editor and Readers of *inside english*:

Starting a publishing company may not be every English teacher's fantasy, but we have long thought about bringing into print and visibility what larger presses ignore. Originally we considered publishing first novels; then we thought of publishing life stories of working people—a project similar to the community publishing being done so well in England. Early this year it occurred to us that the best reason for a publishing venture was the need for a book of writing by and for our community college students.

So we started Leopold-Littleberry Press (a name that honors both of our late fathers). We selected 12 essays from four colleges, and with the help of our colleague, Marie Wilson, we collected biographical information and pictures of the student writers, all of whom are or once were enrolled in community colleges. We found what seemed to us an appropriate title—*Look Who's Talking*. We selected paper and typeface, designed layout and cover, and found the work both more difficult and more rewarding than we ever anticipated. But we have a product. We hope that *Look Who's Talking* will serve the needs of students and of faculty, and if it does, we hope that eventually more and more community colleges will be represented.

The biographies together with the writings show various ways of *how* different people begin to write. The collection makes a statement about *why* to write: to put into language ideas and experiences so that others, too, can understand them. The people writing here don't usually find their way into print or into public visibility, but this, of course, is the underlying reason we are publishing.

We are launching our venture in the pages of *inside english*—through this letter, through an advertisement in the last issue and one in the next issue. We have also sent a copy of *Look Who's Talking* to each community college English chairperson in California. We hope you will take a look. We hope you will like what you see, and we hope you will place an order. If you can't locate a copy, write us and we'll be glad to send you one.

ANN CONNOR
Foothill College
MARLENE GRIFFITH
Laney College

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Berkeley, CA 94704

COMPOSITION (?) MADE EASY

Editor:

Just in case some impressionable young teachers read Mr. White's story ["Composition Made Easy," *i.e.* March 1981, pp. 1, 3], let's set the record straight:

1) most students learn to write in grade school — that is, they learn how to approximate the spoken language in terms of written symbols;

2) "expository writing" is *not*, by anybody except Mr. White's account, the "normal way in which we learn to express our feelings";

3) there is *no* evidence from educational research that any of Mr. White's methods or materials "teach" writing or help students learn to write better;

4) "simple sentences" are not suitable for adult expression — "simple," we assume, refers to basic sentence patterns children learn at about age two.

On a positive note, Mr. White's concerns seem real enough, but his remedies utterly fail to alleviate the student-writing syndrome; if he detects change in his students' writing, it's the normal change associated with going to school, maturing, and practicing composition, regardless of any particular course of study.

The research in rhetoric (some two thousand published studies of any statistical, corroborative, or follow-up value) should convince any interested teacher of the following:

1) written composition is an extension of the writer's personality — it reacts to regimentation, arbitrary limits, and even "friendly advice" just as the writer does in the flesh;

2) change in writing style reflects development of some aspect of the writer's personality (and in the case of school game-playing, an adaptation of the writer to school games);

3) the only pedagogy known to help students write "better" (in terms of school rhetoric) is directed rewriting, particularly when it offers students a choice of alternative expressions.

Finally, since Mr. White's own writing is an inconsistent mix of first-person narrative, direct address, dialogue, and excess verbiage; and since he boasts about imposing severe restrictions on student writing style and form, it follows that his students who "learn to write," as he says, actually learn to imitate Mr. White, no doubt for the purpose of obtaining a passing grade.

By "no doubt" here, I mean that linguistic analysis of Mr. White's writing and that of his students would show a high correlation between letter-grades and imitation of teacher's writing style (in this case, lack of style).

Be more careful next time,
Karl Staubach
Diablo Valley College

THANK YOU

Dear Editor:

Never thought I'd make a center fold!!

Thanks for the wonderful spot in *i.e.* Have had fourteen requests and checks, of course, for copies of the *Working Book*.

i.e. is a great contribution to all of us.

Helena Hale
Santa Barbara City College

Literature Courses—Then and Now

By MIRIAM B. BECKWITH
Center for the Study of Community Colleges

Like their colleagues in other disciplines, two-year college literature instructors are associated with an institution that is constantly changing and that prides itself on its ability to adapt, shift, and respond. Literature classes themselves appear to reflect this tendency to change. Is it possible to chart which aspects of literature instruction have changed and which have remained constant?

Data from two studies — Leonard Vincent Koos' examination in 1924 of junior college literature courses and the Center for the Study of Community Colleges' 1977 survey — provide a solid basis for looking at the kinds of change and the degree of change that have occurred in literature courses. Among the issues Koos investigated was the extent to which course work in high school and in junior college overlapped. His analysis of the types of assignments in high school literature courses, the course goals, and the use of class time provides a perspective for the findings of a study—sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and conducted by the Center—that examined the instructional practices in humanities courses, generally, and in literature courses, specifically.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

One marked change is the sharp decline in the number of pages that students are required to read for a literature course. In 1923, the median page requirement was 2,127; whereas in 1977, the average page assignment was 788. Another and perhaps more meaningful way to look at the change in the number of pages assigned is to examine the requirement in terms of each class hour. Koos showed that the average literature course met for eighty-two hours and required twenty-nine pages per hour. Today some colleges are on the quarter system and others on the semester; some colleges offer three units per course and others five units. Amidst this variation the course that most logically compares with those reported by Koos is a five-unit semester course that meets an average of eighty-six hours and requires nine pages of reading for each class hour.

Certainly, this dramatic decrease accompanies an enormous change in the background and experience that students bring to the classroom now as compared to Koos' time. In his study Koos found that the average high school literature class required 1,780 pages of reading. Although no figures are available for current high school classes, various educational spokespersons and articles attest to an alarming absence of either breadth or depth in the reading experiences of recent high school graduates (Prichard, 1970; Mertes, 1972; Schlegel, 1978).

However, a positive change is the variety of reading materials

now available and so utilized by two-year college literature instructors. Whereas Koos found that almost all the selections assigned were contained in anthologies, the 1977 study showed that instructors made limited use of collections of readings and relied more heavily on complete works in paperback form.

OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL CHANGES

Both studies examined the use of class time. Koos' study indicated that one-third of the class time was devoted to instructor lectures, 40 per cent was spent in recitation, 17 per cent on activities such as class discussion and student reports, and 9 per cent on quizzes and exams. The findings from the Center's study revealed the following allocation of class time: instructor's lectures, 40 per cent; class discussions, 33 per cent; quizzes and exams, 10 per cent; viewing and listening to media, 9 per cent; and students' oral presentations, 8 per cent.

Clearly, the major difference in the use of class time is that the formal recitation procedure in which the instructor asks students to demonstrate verbally their knowledge and familiarity with the assigned material has essentially disappeared as a pedagogical device. Recitation has been superseded by a greater emphasis on class discussion, a less formal mode in which students can demonstrate their mastery of factual material and both discuss and clarify their ideas and responses to the reading materials. In addition, contemporary instructors have the option of using various forms of media to expand upon salient concerns and to enrich students' reading experiences. Interestingly, the amount of time devoted to lectures and quizzes and exams has remained basically the same during the fifty-year period.

In examining the work expected of students beyond the reading of literary selections, Koos found that 40 per cent of the institutions required oral reports of students and over 80 per cent required a written paper with an average length of 4800 words. The Center's survey did not ask instructors if they required oral and/or written reports; rather, instructors were asked about the importance of these two activities (as well as others) in determining students' grades. Twenty-five per cent of the instructors did not respond at all to the item on oral reports; this may mean that they do not include such reports as a part of the course. Another 40 per cent indicated that oral reports were not included in determining grades. Responding to the importance given to outside papers, nearly 60 per cent of the instructors replied that such papers counted as 25 per cent or more of the grade; another 30 per cent required outside papers but considered them as less than 25 per cent of the grade. The above responses indicate that today's literature instructors not only require outside papers more frequently than they do oral reports but attach more importance to them as well. However, current findings indicate that these papers are much shorter than the papers described by Koos.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

Have the goals of literature courses undergone as severe an alteration as have the reading requirements and the emphasis on written and oral work? No, rather there appears to be a continuous thread between what contemporary instructors believe the primary objectives should be and the objectives desired by their classroom predecessors. Over half of the instructors polled in the Center's study felt that the most important objective of their literature course was to develop critical thinking. Instructors cited in Koos' study also considered the development of a critical sense as their primary objective.

CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps what is most surprising in this fifty-year perspective on literature courses is the constancy of certain elements. Instructors' goals for students remain basically unaltered, as has the allocation of class time to instructors' lectures and quizzes and exams. The instructional aspects that have shifted most sharply are those over which instructors have less control and those for which trends in the larger society seem to have necessitated changes in pedagogical practices.

That the amount of assigned reading in today's literature courses has dropped enormously, that students' papers are considerably shorter, and that formal oral reports are required less frequently reflect a general decline in these skills. The lower schools seem less able to teach basic literacy skills than they were in earlier eras. The consequence is that students today arrive at postsecondary institutions poorly prepared to read, write, and even speak in their native tongue. Since the teaching of literature is obviously linked to the literacy skills of students, the instructional program has been modified and, in many cases, made less rigorous.

But instructors have, at least tacitly, contributed to the change. They have consented to new policies instituted by many colleges to cope with a new, heterogeneous student population. These policies have served to further erode curricular and instructional authority. For example, punitive grading was abolished: students unable to do what was required should not receive an F grade. Rather, they could be given a "W" (Withdrawal), "I" (Incomplete or In Progress), "D" (Dropped), or a number of other similar marks to indicate that they dropped the course without penalty. Also, institutions abandoned the practice of probation or suspension for students who did not make satisfactory grades. In addition, many colleges have dropped course prerequisites and no longer require students to have program counseling. Thus, the common pattern of today is students dropping in to take courses, dropping out of school without penalty, and then dropping back in again at another time.

What can instructors do to combat some of the trends that have

affected the course changes reported here? First, they can work to bolster the curriculum in the secondary schools. In the past decade California secondary schools have reduced their English requirements from four to three years, expanded the size of the classes, and, in response to decreased public and financial support, helped to create unprepared graduates.

Secondly, literature instructors can become more involved in their professional associations and the publications, like *inside english*, affiliated with those associations. The association itself is not a panacea for improving the language competencies of community college students, but with active support from its members it can become an effective lobby for increased English requirements and more rigorous standards AND increased fiscal backing for the secondary schools. The association can also help instructors share information and strategies. The Center's studies on two-year college faculty — *What Effects the Program* and *The Two-Year College Instructor Today* — have shown how isolated instructors have become and how important it is that they interact with their colleagues.

Lastly, instructors need to challenge those institutional policies that say to students that it is all right to take a casual, uninvolved attitude toward their courses. Faculty should make clear to students what the course expectations are and follow through with appropriate grades when students don't fulfill the requirements. In short, instructors can do more than read these findings and shrug their shoulders in weary resignation; they can take some positive steps.

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THE LIVELIEST LITERATURE OR Is Bergman Really Gynt's Peer?

By GARY HOFFMAN
Orange Coast College

Academe is never completely tooled-up for a new form of literature. Probably, if a higher education based on academic disciplines existed in pre-Biblical days, the spirits of the scholar-wizards would certainly cringe on hearing that "literature" now includes non-oral, initially-written-down stories.

This kind of shock is not new: Shakespeare did not assume equal importance with Homer in literary studies until over one hundred years after his death; Romantic poets like Coleridge and Wordsworth were not worthy of literary study at Oxford until the 1930's; some major American universities held off serious study of American literature, including Melville, Hawthorne, and Dickinson, until well into the 1950's. In fact, into the 1930's scholars argued whether the study of "literature," then centered on poetry, could allow any novel to gallop through the gate. Perhaps nothing is judged worthy until academe builds proper jargon and theory to corral the new form or artist. A more important reason for scholar-stammer over the novel was that Fielding, Austen, and Dickens were thought of as entertainers for popular tastes; certainly their novels could not be blooms from Apollo's garden.

Film has suffered from this same prejudice. But some films are beginning to be accepted as literature. After all, they illuminate life's complexities through fresh storytelling—fusing plot, characterization, imagery, and style to suggest meaning.

ENTHUSIASM COMPROMISED

Over the past five years film courses have sprouted in English departments across the country. Thoreau should have been so lucky with his beans. The professors who have cultivated these courses have discovered that film forms a vital new literary genre or form; they also seem afraid to admit it. Since film has primarily been thought of as entertainment or, at best, a visual art, for an English department to give film the same status as "real" literature has been about as likely as canonizing a saint while he or she is still eating meat and potatoes. For instance, in giving film literary status, English departments have unconsciously compromised their enthusiasm in one of three ways:

(1) If the campus film history and appreciation course has not been donated to the theatre arts or photography departments, English departments fence it knowing the course is safe turf. There is the assumption here, carried over from other historically oriented humanities courses, that because a film introduces a new convention, it is worthy of study. Maybe, but innovation itself does not make something a great work of literature. Most are flim flam, films totally lacking in mystery and complexity and easily reduced to simple prose statements. Early, obvious examples include Melies's *Trip to the Moon*, Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, or Griffith's *The Lonedale Operator* with their innovative use of dissolve, montage, and close-up, respectively. But let's face it; most of the movies from the archives could never pretend to be as rich as Chaucer or Faulkner.

(2) Some English departments know the appeal of popular culture studies and so offer American film genre courses: comparisons of historical, social, and political dramas; westerns; musicals; horror movies. This focus encourages use of films like *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Birds*, *The Wild Bunch*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *Z*, *Zabriskie Point*, and *Bang the Drum Slowly*. This is fast-food film that could never compete with complex literary art but could, with difficulty, compete with primetime television or the collected works of Rod McKuen. Most of these films draw instructors' attention because of their commercial success or socio-political dimension. The commercial success or political effectiveness of a film or written work has nothing to do with constituting great literature, although great literature can be commercially successful or politically effective. Books and films that are basically of commercial appeal linger in the memories of money-makers and sentimentalists. Films primarily involved in cultural or political statements are finally important only to historians and sociologists.

(3) Some departments have muffled their guilt by teaching "film and novel" courses, a good way to exclude films worthy enough to be great literature on their own terms and, instead, encourage the viewing of films that rely on the original novel as a literary crutch. Such skeletal remains can include films like *Sound and the Fury*, *Moby Dick*, or *Farewell to Arms*. The fresh verbal texture that made these novels original and living is stripped away and replaced with the current, fashionable, cliche look and pace expected by a mass audience, or a sterile, drama-made-for-classroom look expected by English teachers. The end result is the same: the complexity of the original novel is flattened.

FILMS *ARE* LITERATURE

What English departments need to admit, however, is that some films make great stories because they are richer than just faithful or "interesting" reproductions of written literature. They are more than just famous entertainments and cultural documents, or interesting visual designs and statements on film aesthetics, or introductions of innovative technical and stylistic conventions.

They are great for older, flesh and blood reasons. They bring alive a complex, often ambiguous, psychological, philosophical, moral point of view through careful, uncompromised meshing of plot, characterization (dialogue and acting), setting, and visual style. Although they demand a new visual awareness, for the most part these films demand the same literary analytical care to understand them; the same literary intelligence to absorb them; the same literary sensitivity to be touched by them, as the literature of Homer, Chaucer, Shakespeare, O'Connor, or Faulkner demands.

Over the past twenty-five years especially, many of the great storytellers have been drawn to film instead of the other literary forms. In another time Bergman, Bresson, Chabrol, Fellini, and others would have been great dramatists or novelists. For them, and the relatively small public that celebrates them, film is more than alive. It forms almost a religious core, something that is believed in as one of the most crucial commentaries on life. It is like the young man in *The New Yorker* claimed: Whether his future wife might be a Christian or Jew, Democrat or Republican, was a matter of little consequence to himself. But he could never marry anyone who did not like Bergman.

My fear is that the academic literary world will recognize these films long after they lose their vanguard freshness; when they are most vulnerable to being easily classified as examples of this or that aesthetic principle or such and such literary movement. On the other hand, that would be nothing new. It is the script of a very old story.

A FILM BIBLIOGRAPHY

I have ponted out what kind of film should not be considered as great literature and list below which films are good literature. Finally, the most convincing arguments that show how these films are the liveliest literature can be made only when these films are seen and discussed in particular. Graduate English departments do not provide such a forum, but with the general criteria I emphasize above, perhaps this is something English departments need to do themselves, first viewing these films by using in-service funds or by coordinating student body and community service film series, then meeting to discuss them.

The films included here that are based

on "old stories" have been done in such a revised, uncompromising spirit of their own, that they stand alone, without using the old "script" as a literary-confirmation-crutch. To hint at why these films attract my attention, I have grouped them and their directors under arbitrarily picked thematic concerns, but their very inclusion in this article should suggest that each film has dimensions that fall under not only the other thematic groups here, but countless other ones.

The following films look into family closets exploring initiation and blackmail: Bergman (Sweden)—*Virgin Spring*, *Wild Strawberries*, and *Cries and Whispers*; Bellochio (Italy)—*Fist in the Pocket*; Scorsese (USA) *Mean Streets*; Malle (France)—*Murmur of the Heart*; Oshima (Japan)—*The Ceremony*; Fellini (Italy)—*Amarcord*; Pinter/Hall (England)—*The Homecoming*; Fassbinder (W. Germany)—*Jail Bait*; Rohmer (France)—*The Marquise of O*; Chabrol (France)—*The Rupture*; Demme (USA)—*Handle With Care*; Berri (France)—*The Two of Us*; the Taviani brothers (Italy)—*Padre Padrone*; Borau (Spain)—*Furtivos*.

Many literary films deal with the overflowing of love and the dilemma of intimacy: Truffaut (France)—*The Story of Adele H.*, *Soft Skin*, and *Jules and Jim*; Chabrol (France)—*Just Before Nightfall* and *Le Boucher*; Varda (France)—*Le Bonheur*; Schlesinger (USA)—*Sunday Bloody Sunday*; Fassbinder (W. Germany)—*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* and *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*; Tanner (Switzerland)—Middle of the World; Rohmer (France)—*My Night at Maud's*; Fellini (Italy)—*La Strada*; Resnais (France)—*Hiroshima Mon Amour*; Shinoda (Japan)—*Double Suicide*; Losey (England)—*The Go-Between*; Blier (France)—*Going Places* and *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs*.

The following films deal with jugglers and saviours, exploring the nature of artistic or spiritual sacrifice: Goretta (Switzerland)—*Wonderful Crook*; Bresson (France)—*Pickpocket*, *Au Hasard Balthazar*, and *Mon Escaped*; Bergman (Sweden)—*The Magician*; Herzog (W. Germany)—*The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser*; Fellini (Italy)—*8½*; Buñuel (Spain)—*Simon of the Desert*; Truffaut (France)—*Day for Night*; Passer (Hungary)—*Intimate Lighting*; Tanner (Switzerland)—*La Salamandre*; Kawalerowicz (Poland)—*Joan of the Angels?*; Downey (USA)—*Greaser's Palace*; Toback (USA)—*Fingers*; Tavernier (France)—*Clockmaker*; Rivette (France)—*Celine and Julie Go Boating*.

Many twentieth century works of literature are concerned with burning out. These films explore anti-heroes and spiritual silence: Malle (France)—*Lacombe, Lucien*; Bertolucci (Italy)—*The Conformist* and *Last Tango in Paris*; Bergman (Sweden)—*Persona*, *Passion of Anna*, and *The Touch*; Malick (USA)—*Badlands*; Antonioni (Italy)—*Blow-up*; Goddard/Gorin (France)—*Tout Va Bien*; Buñuel (Spain)—*Viridiana*; Bresson (France)—*Lancelot du Lac*; Fassbinder (W. Germany)—*Merchant of Four Seasons*; Wenders (W. Germany)—*False Movement*; Tanner (Switzerland)—*Charles Dead or Alive*; Alea (Cuba)—*Memories of Underdevelopment*; Rohmer (France)—*La Collectionneuse*; Allen (USA)—*Manhattan*.

The following films are splintered mirrors. They explore double realities and alter-egos: Altman (USA)—*Three Women and Images*; Cocteau (France)—*Beauty and the Beast* and *Orpheus*; Bergman (Sweden)—*Hour of the Wolf* and *Through a Glass Darkly*; Bresson (France)—*Une Femme Douce*; Bertolucci (Italy)—*Spider's Stratagem* and *The Partner*; Fellini (Italy)—*Juliet of the Spirits*; Polanski (England)—*Repulsion*; Resnais (France)—*Last Year at Marienbad*; Buñuel (Spain)—*Belle de Jour*; Goretta (Switzerland)—*The Invitation*; Scott (England)—*The Duellists*.

Some films stare death down. They deal with the inevitability of death and its confrontation: Bergman (Sweden)—*Seventh Seal*; Varda (France)—*Cleo from 5-7*; Kurosawa (Japan)—*Ikiru*; Resnais (France)—*Providence*; Carlsen (Sweden)—*Hunger*; Gilroy (USA)—*Desperate Characters*; Wajda (Poland)—*Ashes and Diamonds*; Kadar (Hungary)—*Adrift*; Altman (USA)—*The Long Goodbye*; Teshigahara (Japan)—*Woman in the Dunes*; Cacoyannis (Greece)—*Zorba the Greek*.

What's a Two-Year College?

REFLECTIONS FROM THE ECCTYC BOARD MEETING

By JIM MOORE
Mt. San Antonio College

Maybe we're not really "two-year colleges." On my campus we've been wrestling with rewriting Graduation Requirements, and it is occurring to most of us that for our occupational students, Mt. San Antonio College is a 3-year college. I received reinforcement on that idea as I chatted with the Claremont Hotel bell-captain. He was also the young man who drove the limousine to and from the airport.

He'd had some time at UC Berkeley, but now he was enrolled in a Hotel and Restaurant Management curriculum at City College of San Francisco. He rose at 5 daily to get on the Bay Bridge at a decent hour so he could cook ("I really don't care about cooking, but I've got to understand it if I'm going to be a good manager,") for 3½ hours so he could endure an hour cooking-critique/lecture so he could proceed to an early afternoon of other related courses — communications, economics, et al. At 3 he was back at the hotel; at 11:30 he got off work, went to sleep, and at 5 the next morning he started it all over. Five days a week.

"If I hadn't got much of my general education work out of the way at UCB, I'd be here all day long," he told me. Yes, HRM majors who were doing all their work at CCSF were in for a 3-year tour. It's that way with MSAC's students in health-related majors — they have 70-units, typically mandated by various state agencies, atop our own general graduation requirements.

Los Angeles City College, whose theater arts program I find superior to all the four year colleges' in southern California, has frankly called its theater academy a 3-year program.

Strangely, I found this "are we a 2-year college" idea and its corollary, sometimes voiced and sometimes only implied, "We're the first 2 years of college" germane to many arguments I overheard — both in Berkeley and at San Diego, where I traveled after the ECCTYC meeting. You see, I consort openly with administrators — my wife's one — and I went along to the Association of California School Administrators' conference the Palm Sunday weekend.

As the English Council from the California State University and Colleges system criticized us — did we know that 1/3 of our colleges had *no* screening device for freshman comp — that we let *everyone* into that vital course? — ECCTYC responses took two lines: 1) "You're absolutely right; we're the first 2 years, so we should have a device to screen people out — we just don't want you to develop that device, we'll do it ourselves;" 2) "You don't understand that we're not a *system* like yours and we respond to local needs. If our particular population needs more laboratory/tutorial/support devices to succeed in freshman comp, we think it's better to do alongside the comp course instead of before it. The population *needs* to succeed."

Granted, there was also the self-serving in the CSUC stance — we are competing with them for students, after all — but any community college teacher could have agreed with both the responses I have recorded.

Likewise an item of controversy at the ACSA meeting: should people be able to pass *any* of the K-12 proficiency tests, let alone the English-language proficiencies, in a language other than English? It was more related than I first thought, because it involves the same local rights' issue. Since in large parts of California the dominant spoken language is rapidly again becoming Spanish, shouldn't students have the option of using that renowned language as well as English? On the other hand, aren't these localities part of California? Isn't California part of the United States? Even if Spanish becomes equal in significance in California (I think it will, I think we should require all our graduates to learn Spanish!) is it likely to become the major language for the United States?

In short, how much can "local differences" come into play as California-in-general grapples with changing times and other segments of statewide education glare at us and the success-in-numbers we continue to enjoy?

At Berkeley, it seemed to me that the CSUC, despite its grumbling, had accepted that *its* proficiency/entrance measurements couldn't be imposed upon us; we could be trusted to devise our own — thanks a lot, fellas. Yet we could not slide all the way to "localism" — American free public education widens worlds, it doesn't hold that anyone's ghetto or suburb is all that he'll ever need. The flexibility of the community colleges is also their permanent dilemma. We are both 2-year and 3-year (and whatever-it-takes) colleges and we'd better remember it and make sure everyone else knows it, too.

Science Made Easy OR

A Method for Teaching Science So Simple Even a Paleomicrobiologist Can Understand It

By DONALD S. PRATT
San Diego City College

Most of us community college English teachers teach science even if it is not our official assignment. While this particular assignment was never sought, it is undertaken because it reflects the process of educating we are all responsible for and which underlies all our subject matter.

My students learn to science. They do so because my classes are not science classes. I could call up Louis Agassiz to explain this but I'll summarize by saying, "Science classes are implicitly artificial." The Science teacher decides what aspects of a science to study. He compartmentalizes that chunk. He lays out a plan of work. He provides the test tubes and all that neat stuff from Edmund Scientific. He sets up 'experiments.' And he supplies a text which has all the answers in it already.

What the student does in terms of science is minimal and a few light years away from the sweaty, grope and guess operation of the hands-on guys.

Since, when I am pretending to teach English, I teach more than basic argumentation and term paper mechanics, I have to confine myself to teaching science directly to only a few early lessons:

LESSON 1

I carry into class a plain brown paper bag and spread out on my desk its contents — fifty or so salted peanuts (I prefer salteds and I munch up the leftovers). I instruct the students to approach the desk, select one peanut, and return with it to their desks. "What is this?" say the looks, grins, and occasional lifted eyebrows. If I was teaching science, I would say they had taken a scientist's first step — curiosity about some chunk of natural phenomenon.

We move to the next step in science — thorough and objective description and observation. "You will write," I intone, "a minimum of 500 words describing completely your entire peanut. Do not tell me about former presidents, George Washington Carver, or the time your dad took you to a ball game. Merely use the five tools Mother Nature gave — sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch — and describe your peanut. You will know you're done when I can use your description to spot your peanut in a crowd. Stop at 10,000 words.

(Over my shoulder, Louis Agassiz gives a ghostly smile and recalls how, on the first day in his classes, he gave each student a fish with instructions to go away for a few weeks and observe the fish.)

The inspections begin, mingled with some experimentation (although, of course, I don't use that word): measure, shake, squeeze, stroke, crack . . . and write. At the first "crack," I call out "Halt!" Then, "if you merely wrote 'brown' to describe the color of the shell, you are going too fast and not looking carefully enough. What shade — tan, camel, an aspen leaf at the bottom of a mountain pool?" When I see that they understand that 'close and thorough' mean 'close and thorough', I send them home to finish.

LESSON 2

We have reached the "So what?" point. Our data assembled and recorded — fully — we can go on the next step in writing and in science: making some sense out of the mass. I ask, "What kind of statements or trial assertions can we now make about the peanut?" I wait, at the blackboard, chalk in hand. Slowly, the responses come and I write them on the board:

Describing a peanut is tough.
No two peanuts are the same.
The peanut is a fine example of packaging.
The peanut is an intricate structure.

"Select" I say, "one of these focusing statements — or one of your own — and, going back through your collected observations, decide which facts best back up the statement. Then arrange them in what seems to you to be the most effective order. Write this up in a paragraph, putting the focus statement at the beginning." The rough draft has begun. Revision will follow.

I stop here, of course, because I have to pretend to be teaching merely English. If I was teaching Science, I might suggest they extend their questioning and research: How does the split line get on to the peanut and what is it for? What of the rest of the plant? What conditions are necessary for its growth?

I assume that form follows function, that the thinking process underlies both writing and science. I cannot then start with a "thesis statement" because I have as yet no data. I cannot set out my sub-points yet because I have not yet worked out approaches to my data. I have to go out and grapple with the real world first.

And Louis, on his way back to continue his observations of celestial cloud formations, nods quietly in agreement.

Working Together

By Evanne Jardin
Santa Barbara City College

In fall 1980 the Santa Barbara City College English Department held a seven meeting series of workshops for composition teachers based on the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP) model. The idea of the workshops was to discuss teaching techniques that work, increase communication between full time and hourly staff, and begin a dialogue that would lead to better articulation between the Essential Skills and Freshman Composition programs. Each workshop had a writing component that allowed the participants to experience the process: they didn't just talk about (or argue about) techniques, assignments, evaluation, etc.; they actually participated by writing.

A basic assumption of writing projects is the three step process in writing: prewriting, writing, and editing. Since most writing classes focus primarily on the latter two, in most of the workshops we did some form of prewriting, or formative writing. Then we discussed the process, how it led into an essay assignment and how it might be adapted to other ends. For example, we had fluency exercises, a structured journal exercise leading to a narrative essay, a presentation of metaphor as the basis of learning, activities to stimulate both hemispheres of the brain, a series of pre-writing tasks leading to a persuasive paper.

The workshops were fun. It was pleasant to see our colleagues and discuss what we were doing in our classes. The results were wonderful. Many people adapted ideas from the workshops to use in their own classes. This provided a sense of energy and accomplishment for everyone.

In assessing the series I would say the most important accomplishment, even more than the ideas discussed, was the energy generated. People felt good about what they were doing and eager to try new things. The ideas presented weren't radical in nature. In fact, many were familiar. The essence was the creation of a community of teachers trying to improve what they were doing, working together in a totally positive way.

-REviews-

"REviews" features discussions of books and media programs that are suitable for use in writing or literature courses or that have special interest for teachers of English. These reviews should be from 100 to 500 words and should evaluate the book's or program's effective use in a classroom, in a learning resource center, by an individual student, or by the instructor. Include with the review all pertinent publication information, the number of pages or length of running time, and the cost.

SHORT FICTION'S ALIVE AND WELL IN CALIFORNIA

By DOUG LANE
Santa Monica College

Fiction, one of the nation's most prestigious literary magazines, has four times as many manuscript submissions as it has subscriptions. Everyone wants to be a scribe, but who wants to be a subscriber? The free market no longer supports short story writers as it once did, and to make a living, writers turn now to episodic television. But many of these writers (like a friend on the staff of "Bad News Bears" who was paid twelve hundred dollars a week to sit around a table and keep his mouth shut) aren't creating literature. They're not even writing. But they are making a damned good living.

But what of us who are so in love with the medium that we will not, cannot, stop ourselves from writing fiction? Can we not hope for a readership (even a shrunken, elitist one), a literary identity, and even MONEY?

Yes, if we want to walk that long, lonesome trail, publishing our tales in literary magazines that pay in copies and, as the years pass, accumulating a creditable oeuvre. Maybe we submit our collection to be judged, along with hundreds of other manuscripts, in a literary contest. And, if we are Mary Hedin (College of Marin), John Gardner gives us the Iowa School of Letters Short Fiction Award for 1979. If we are James Fetler (Foothill College), Francine du Plessix Gray gives us the nod for the same award in 1980. Now we have token remuneration (one thousand dollars), benediction and validation from on high, and — most important hardbound publication.

Fetler *(Impossible Appetites)* and Hedin *(Fly Away Home)* are deserving winners. They are also, from the evidence of the dust jacket photos, well into handsome, graying, robust middle-age. Their years have won them prose that is controlled and precise, narratives that are cohesive, and perspectives that are compassionate.

Fetler's desperate (Eastern European?) humor tends to focus on loners; the most touching of these is Yuri Serafimovich, aging sailor, naturalist, world traveller, and loyal exile from a vanished nation — Imperial Russia. And he keeps a tin box under his bed.

> "'In this tin,' Serafimovich said gravely, as though delivering his own funeral oration, 'is our mother soil. This is our soil. You understand what I say, Alexander Alexandrovich. The soil I dug up from a frozen field near Murmansk when I was a young man. A young man. I have kept it, my friend, because this has been country and home. This soil. The soil from which our seed sprang.'
>
> "He took the tin, balanced it on his lap, and inhaled the dust, as though human bones lay buried in it — bones of Father and Mamushka and girls he had loved. Bones of uncles in fur coats and comrades in school."

(Perhaps Fetler writes so well of exile because he himself is from a devoured nation — Latvia.)

In spite of his obstinate ignorance of checks and balances, legislators, chief justices, and chief executives, Serafimovich passes the naturalization exam and is made a U.S. citizen. Now he is eligible for the elderly indigents' pension. His money problems are solved, yet all is not well. His compatriot Alexandrovich sees him at the zoo "... shuffling from compound to compound, from railing to railing, and each time he stopped he plunged his hand into the tin box and scattered the dust among the beasts .... Dust to the elephants, dust to the imprisoned cats. Like a painter the old man was sowing his dust."

In "The Indians Don't Need Me Any More" a would-be radical instructor at "Peninsula State" sweats out a hot Friday:

> "... my other colleagues were ambling from class to class in their usual short-sleeved dripdry shirts like NASA engineers, but I stuck to the turtleneck

> and boots I'd decided would best represent the real me, plus the other bold touches designed to impress and seduce undergrads — torn jeans and shades. That was part of the contract, I figured, getting the Camaro crowd turned on to Yeats and Flaubert using all the theatricals at your command, including the proper cosmetics. You had to relate."

The afternoon wears on:

> "... I pushed them through ten, fifteen minutes of Tolstoy, clutching my chest, acting out Ivan Ilyich's torment and death, everything but the actual screaming, but when I finally finished my performance they responded with a silence so solid and compressed you could haul it away in a furniture van.
>
> I leaned against the desk: artificial pearls cast out to gentle swine. 'So what's he saying — Ivan Ilyich's life had been most simple and most ordinary, and therefore most terrible — what does that mean?'"

This is Fetler at his best. He soars when his characters become too isolated and put-upon, their lives airless, their antagonists unrelentingly obnoxious.

Fiction about the teaching of fiction would seem to be a circular subject, but Fetler and Hedin join the select company of Anthony Burgess *(Enderby's End*, set at CCNY) and Christopher Isherwood *(A Solitary Man*, set at LA State) as writers who have successfully informed this circle.

In Hedin's "Ladybug, Fly Away Home," an instructor sits in her office:

> "The phone rings. A Mrs. Bradford: high anxious voice. 'Can't you change his grade? He's just not a creative person. He's very sweet, but he's just not creative. He can't write essays. I mean, he's really upset about this. He has to pass this course, he's going into forestry. I mean, Randy is very hot tempered. I'm afraid what he'll do, getting an F like that.' Yes. A fierce violent young man. Should I be afraid?"

Hedin is sharpest when she sticks close to home. "Plastic Edge to Plastic Edge" is told from the point of view of a middle-aged and married Marin woman. She (Valerie) and her husband (Dan) attend the elaborately orchestrated wedding of a friend to a girl half his age. Valerie stares at his new country house:

> "He has shaped this place to fit a dream, has created a mythic setting, an Eden, for his new woman, his new life, himself. While Dan admires, appreciates, Valerie is stiffly indignant. 'It's pretentious, it's not real,' she asserts. 'The place needs actors, film scripts, cameras!'"

Later, she grudgingly realizes that the groom's "arrangement is perfect, his romantic fantasy achieved." A friend asks her, "'How do you like the spread, Val?' 'I'm positively covetous,' she replies. The edge of mockery in her words serves to hide, even from herself, the element of true confession."

Hedin masterfully outlines the abyss beneath domestic certainty. I am sorry she chose to end the story on a sentimental upbeat. It was originally published in *McCall's*. Did the editors pressure her to close it in a fashion that would reassure their readers?

She uses cool, steely social observation to skate her narratives over the thin ice that separates able writers from the vague, the mawkish, the manipulative, or the doctrinaire. Occasionally, she plunges through, as in "The Peculiar Vision of Mrs. Winkler," a poor joke at best, whose anti-Vietnam War sermon dates it rather than giving it historical texture. Nor did I care to bathe with her in the warm, wet sentiment of the little girl who cares for a hidden kitten (her father kills it, of course) in "Places We Lost."

On the other hand, "Oatmeal" and "His Father's Son" have the narrative momentum to delineate how quickly the family can transform itself from something habitual and secure into a ferocious, self-destroying quagmire.

Fetler and Hedin look better close up than far away. I like their brush strokes better than their patterns. By dint of their prose styles they have made themselves excellent miniaturists. Will they someday be able to combine their word-mosaics into grander, more formidable designs?

I wish them well. They have achieved something that the rest of us who write short fiction also hope for: validation that what we do is worthy of being read and commented upon and rewarded.

Mary Hedin, *FLY AWAY HOME*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1980. 249 pgs; James Fetler, *IMPOSSIBLE APPETITES*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1981. 158 pgs.

LITERATURE AS AN ART

By ELAINE M. McLEVIE
Grossmont College

In *Teaching the Art of Literature*, published by the National Council of Teachers of English, Bruce Miller makes an important distinction between literature as an art and literature as one of the humanities. In the introduction he carefully justifies his emphasis on literature as an art, able to convey an "event-object-meaning" which "has enormous import" over and above message meaning. A discussion follows on the relationship between teaching and reading literature and the complexity of the classroom interchange.

Part I is a discussion of the assumptions on which our literature teaching is based, with good use of vignettes to illustrate distinctions being made. The section dealing with the place of the reader or viewer in "constituting" a piece of literature is rather repetitive, but it does serve to underline the need for the prospective teacher to recognize the role of the student and the build-up to informed interpretation. Mr. Miller uses specific and dynamic examples, and analyzes a wide variety of example passages, giving helpful guidelines.

Part II, in which teaching the lyric, the short story, the novel, and drama are each discussed, is particularly effective, as is the "Afterword" which sums up the main points of Part I.

For teachers who want to keep alive their own love for literature and their desire to share that love, this book will be a useful source of encouragement. Mr. Miller reminds us of the many steps through which we have to lead students in order to make available to them the richness of literature. He does a good job of pointing out those classroom activities which can lead the students to want to read more and to be able to enjoy the complexity of what they read.

Bruce Miller, *Teaching the Art of Literature*, Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980, 138 pages.

Just Before Easter Break

When I taught structure,
they wrote like zombies.
I tried free writing,
and they wandered.
After a little punctuation,
commas littered the papers
like beachfuls
of spent gruntion.
I backed off mechanics,
and they complained
the class was remedial.

About Libby's research paper
it is true I told her
"how the devil
gets into our bodies"
wasn't acceptable,
but it was her idea
to tell the dean
I am an atheist.

The trouble with teaching
is you have to do something.

Sydney Bowie
Kings River Community College

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What's ECCTYC Been Up To Lately?

On 9 and 10 April 1981, the ECCTYC Board of Directors held a most successful meeting at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. This meeting was held in conjunction with the CSUC English Council and the UC English Council, allowing the ECCTYC representatives to maintain liaison with these groups through a series of joint meetings and information exchanges.

A major item of business during the two-day meeting was consideration of the proposed "Statewide Standard for Entrance to Freshman Composition Courses." The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) had requested that each of the three English Councils take a position on the proposed standard, and the State Chancellor's Office had sent ECCTYC a letter underscoring the need to discuss this issue. After first the Composition Committee and then the entire Board carefully examined the various aspects of this proposed standard and the issues involved in adopting it, the ECCTYC Board went on record as unanimously reaffirming its endorsement of the statewide standard. However, it also unanimously passed the following resolution, underscoring ECCTYC's concern about future implementation of the standard:

> "In accepting this CPEC resolution, we wish to underline the crucial relation between this four-part standard and teaching load and student/teacher ratio. The varied kinds of writing experiences necessary to achieving the standard depend upon having the time to teach."

During discussion of the statewide standard, a representative of the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges (ASCCC) presented to the Board that group's position on enforcement of the standard. The ECCTYC Board did not endorse the ASCCC position, feeling strongly that the acceptance of the standard had to be separated from the question of enforcement, so that the issues involved would not be unnecessarily clouded. The Board did direct the president to transmit a statement of its action to CPEC, including in that statement a strong recommendation that application of the standard be the task of a committee of writing instructors, similar to the Blue Ribbon Committee that formulated the standard.

A second major item of business at the spring conference was approving the plans for the statewide English Conference ECCTYC will be sponsoring in November 1981. The Board gave final approval to the selection of the Sir Francis Drake Hotel in San Francisco as the site of the conference and to the selection of 5 to 7 November 1981 as the dates for the conference. The registration fee will be fifty dollars, if paid in advance, or sixty dollars, if paid at the door. Registration allows full participation in all conference sessions and includes luncheon on Friday. Publicity, site arrangements, and reservations are being handled by John Callen and Jim Cagnacci, both of City College of San Francisco.

The Board enthusiastically endorsed the proposed program as set forth by Marlene Griffith (Laney) and John Lovas (De Anza). The unique

program they have planned will be a celebration of the successes of community college English instructors, a celebration of those things we do best. Watch for the advance publicity that will be sent to each department before the end of the current academic year.

At the spring meeting, the Board also elected individuals to fill two vacancies that will occur on the Executive Committee at the end of this academic year. Judy Hert (San Bernardino Valley) was elected to a full two-year term as vice-president, continuing in that office; Dick McIntosh (Cypress) was elected to a two-year term as treasurer.

One other action taken by the Board was the appointment of an Ad Hoc Budget Committee, composed of the current members of the Executive Committee, to review present finances and to estimate resources and expenses for the coming academic year. At their last session of the spring meeting, the Board heard and approved the recommendations of this group. One recommendation was to effect a modest increase in membership/subscription fees for the next academic year, an increase made necessary by increases in postage, in printing costs for *i.e.*, and in the prices of necessary supplies. A second recommendation was that first priority be given this next year to establishing a specific operational budget for *inside english*; the creation of such a budget will commit the Board to spending a specific amount on journal production and will give the journal editor a total cost figure within which to operate for the entire academic year.

As classroom teachers wind down the activities of this academic year, ECCTYC is already gearing up for 1981-82. Watch for news of our fall statewide conference; keep Bob Mognis (Modesto), chair of ECCTYC's Load/Differential Committee, aware both of problems and of successes at the local level; lend assistance to Jack Gill (College of San Mateo), chair of ECCTYC's Literature/Humanities Committee, in his efforts to maintain adequate graduation requirements in this area and to expand enrollments in present literature/humanities programs. In short, support ECCTYC! ECCTYC supports YOU!

JIM CAGNACCI
City College of San Francisco

Bills, Bills Everywhere

—SACRAMENTO SCENE—

By GORDON TAYLOR
Yuba College

There is a lot of activity in Sacramento, but not much is happening. It is the season of hearings, maneuvering, compromise. The various committees meet, and they hear bills; they are passing some on to the Senate or the House; no one, however, can as yet predict any of the results. As we all know, the law that gets passed often does not resemble the bill that was introduced. Many proposals affect education—some good, some not so good, some awful, and some "who cares," except those who propose them in the first place.

Gary Hart's bill (AB 757) that would require teachers to pass a proficiency test in order to teach seems, for the moment, to have stirred the troops the most. Paul Carpenter introduced a similar measure in the Senate (SB 424), and each has passed its respective Education Committee. Even though these bills do not apply to community college (CC) teachers, they do have some peripheral implications (more of which later). CTA opposes the bill on specious grounds: if teachers got through college, they know basic skills; it is the students who need help, not the teachers; the tests will be used to keep minorities from becoming teachers. Well, ho hum! A school district that tests its applicants, Lemon Grove near San Diego, reports that 35 per ceat failed to pass its proficiency test. The Los Angeles district reports similar results. Most districts, however, require no tests at all. Some teachers say that basic skills are not the problem: the problems are students who are on drugs, who come from unintellectual or broken homes, who are handicapped, who do not know English very well. These teachers claim also to be the victims of various and sundry attitudes of society in general. All these things are no doubt true and perhaps even partially valid, but they do beg the question. We must still teach the basic skills, and them what don't know 'um cain't teach 'um.' There are, also, those around who say that the majors in education tend to be the weakest students and treat it as common knowledge that a degree in education requires little knowledge of the subject its recipient will teach. Worse even than that, though, is the attitude that many of these subjects do not need to be taught.

A report to the Educational Policy Committee of the California State Universities and Colleges (CSUC) indicates that this year 58 per cent of the freshmen who took the English Placement Test (EPT) failed to get the minimum score (150 out of 180) necessary to enter freshman English. The percentage who get that score has been declining every year since 1977 when the test was introduced. (CSU Sacramento, however, reports that that trend is apparently beginning to change.) Reports of the University of California show the same dismal picture: around 56 per cent of their entering freshmen do not make it into freshman English.

Along these same lines, about 25 per cent of the seniors in high school will not graduate this year because they cannot pass their districts' proficiency tests. These tests are supposed to verify that each student who graduates can read, write, and calculate at the eighth grade level. Obviously, no one can say that these students failed because their teachers did not know their subjects: students have ways of resisting things as well. Some of these 25 per cent will, of course, get some remedial work or take a summer's course and graduate anyway, and the schools' officials anticipate that the percentages of students who fail will decline sharply as soon as more people

But Hardly a Law in Sight

take the test and its consequences seriously.

The "Statewide Standard for Entrance to Freshman Composition Courses," reported on last time, is making its way through the maze of committees, organizations, and departments. ECCTYC approved it at its Board of Directors meeting in the fall. [See President's Message p. 7.] The Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges (ASCCC) have approved it, sort of: in principle, they said. But they did not like some of the appended statements that said something about "segmentwide examination" in evaluating and placing students. They resolved that the document read: "This evaluation shall take the form of a written examination that the English faculty of each community college agrees meets the standard previously set forth in this document." A way, one suspects, of setting a statewide non-standard.

The CSUC's Executive Order 338 concerning the General Education and Breadth Requirements and its Executive Order 167 on the transfer of baccalaureate level courses are causing consternation. EO 167 angers many—even though representatives from the CC's (named by the ASCCC) were on the committee that wrote it—because it seems to give the CSUC's the power to validate or certify the CC's courses. The CC's are now working up lists of courses that will fit the criteria established by EO 338, but these too must be accepted as valid by the CSUC's. Our concern is mainly Area A: Communication in the English Language. A-1, Oral Communication, is easy to define; A-2, Written Communication, generally means English 1A. A-3, Critical Thinking, confuses. Many are saying that English 1B will do the job, others say a course in logic, and yet others suggest statistics. People at the CSUC Chancellor's Office suggest that any course that will develop the ability to think critically or logically will serve: it does not have to be three units in something called critical thinking. The idea is obviously open to interpretations that will take us time to resolve.

CATE held its annual conference in Sacramento in February. It was generally uninspiring as it labored mightily to make the old look somehow new. Dozens of people offered dozens of suggestions about teaching basic stuff (the old, but now a new trend) in ways that would get the students' attention (trendy a few years ago, but now old: the tired and probably untrue). I was able to do no more than sample a few, but if the list of workshops and section meetings is any indication, solutions, approaches, techniques abound. They all promise of course the resolution to some aspect of the teaching of English or some variant thereof. Autobiographical writing, reading newspapers, interdisciplinary this and that, approaches to this brain or that brain, debate, writing across the bored [sic], reading cartoons, dealing with frameworks [sic] from the State's Department of Education—all will do something for the harried teacher and the victimized student.

Assemblyman Leroy Greene, Chairman of the Education Committee, addressed CATE's convention. In his brief speech, he said that more segments of society want larger portions of a smaller pie. The schools will get first crack at the money, though, since money bills for schools require only a simple majority; all others require a two-thirds majority. He said that the governor would like to cut the 7.5 per cent increase required by AB 8 to 5 per cent, but would need to change AB 8 to do so, which would take a two-thirds majority, as well.

Some things to watch in the legislature: Some bills that are frazzling some nerves:

—There are three (along with some minor ones) that propose charging fees: 1) AB 1491 (Sebastiani) would authorize the Board of Governors of the CC's to charge

(Continued on Page 2)

News From Our Regions

REGION IV: NORTH VALLEY REGION

Directors: Maryann Kellar, San Joaquin Delta College; Bob Mognis, Modesto Junior College.

Maryann Kellar and Bob Mognis chaired a regional meeting on 26 March 1981 at San Joaquin Delta College. Fourteen representatives from four colleges attended. Discussion concerned ESL needs, literature enrollments, GE requirements, placement testing, and basic skills. The group expressed several concerns, including opposition to reduced or differential funding for basic skills courses and opposition to the concept of statewide testing for composition placement.

INTER-REGIONAL NEWS

Joe Fitschen of Lassen College (Region I), Barbara Bilson of Santa Monica College (Region VII), and Richard Tracey, Jr. of Cerritos College (Region VIII) will be spending the summer in Seattle, Washington as participants at the NEH Summer Seminar "Contrastive Analysis of Various Approaches to Teaching Composition." The seminar, led by Dr. William Irmscher of the University of Washington, provides an opportunity for these three California community college English instructors to join with nine other colleagues from colleges and universities around the nation to study intensely the composition process. In addition, the participants work on an individual project during the two months of the seminar.

Peggy Boegeman of Cypress College (Region VIII), Western Division Chair of The Community College Humanities Association, presided over a successful Western Regional Conference, 24-25 April 1981. Also from Region VIII were the Assistant Program Chair, Rebecca Welch (Saddleback College, North Campus) and Assistant Arrangements Chair, Tom Lew (El Camino College). The ECCTYC Board and the various regions were also well represented at the conference. Among those giving presentations or moderating panels were John Lovas (DeAnza College) of Region III, Bert Woodruff (Fresno City College) of Region V, Tony Gilleran (Santa Barbara City College) of Region VI, Barbara Bilson (SMC) and Mary Spangler (Los Angeles Valley College) both of Region VII, and Gloria Floren and Julie Hatoff (MiraCosta) of Region X.

LITERATURE

(Continued from Page 1)

are not uniquely academic. The so-called "real" world of business and industry has quite a history of dinosaurs. The American automobile industry currently faces a serious challenge to its future existence. An example closer to our own field—the American mass-circulation magazine (e.g., *Collier's, The Saturday Evening Post, Look* and *Life*)—illustrates that one generation's institutions can become the next generation's curiosity pieces. Since the idea of literature teaching becoming either a dinosaur or a curiosity piece appalls me, I'd like to go through whatever painful process is required to rethink and restructure the literature program so that our college will again have an important part of its students studying literature. What follows are some thoughts about that process.

IN TRYING to clarify the problem, I think we must clearly understand that the issue is NOT the survival of literature. Mankind has used language (both spoken and written) as an artistic medium throughout history. Literature, in some form—probably many forms, will flourish. But there's nothing guaranteeing that adults will seek out literature courses. For that reason, we need to understand why adults want to study literature as a base point for considering how we teach literature in coming decades.

I have been charged with chairing the Task Group to revise our college Mission Statement. In connection with that task, De Anza President Bob DeHart sent me a copy of a chapter titled "Business Purpose and Business Mission" from Peter Drucker's *Management Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*. Drucker's opening paragraph reads:

> Every one of the great business builders we know of — from the Medici and the founders of the Bank of England down to IBM's Thomas Watson in our day — had a definite idea, had, indeed, a clear theory of the business which informed his actions and decisions. A clear, simple, and penetrating theory of the business rather than intuition characterizes the truly successful entrepreneur, the man who not just amasses a large fortune but builds an organization that can endure and grow long after he is gone.

As simple as it sounds, I think our first step is to find or formulate "a clear, simple, and penetrating theory" of teaching literature which can inform our actions and decisions. Drucker goes on to outline a series of questions which he believes would allow any organization to formulate a clear theory of its purpose and mission. I have modified the language of his questions to suit our academic setting:

1. What is our task?
2. Who is the student?
3. Where is the student?
4. What is of value to the student?
5. What should our task be?
   a. What will our task be?
   b. What unsatisfied needs/wants does the student have?

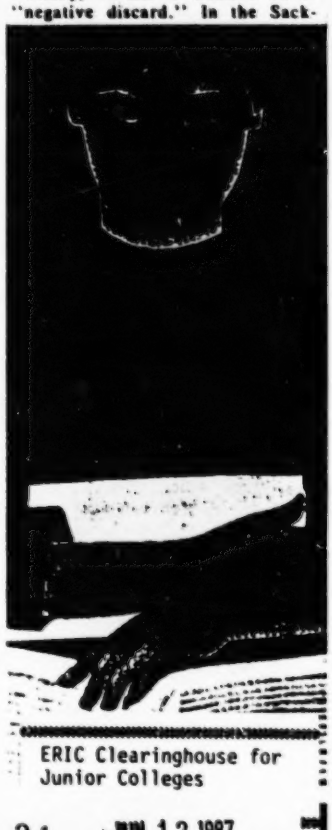
These strike me as fundamental questions, ones that, if we can answer them adequately, may allow us to identify a clear purpose for a literature program in a suburban two-year community college in the midst of booming Silicon Valley.

AS I SAID earlier, we are not alone. Many articles in the journals are given over to discussing the future of literary studies. In the September, 1980, issue of the *ADE Bulletin*, Arthur M. Eastman, Chairman of the English Department at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, has created a fictional scenario of an English Department grappling with the "composition and tech writing UP, literature and majors DOWN" syndrome. The situation may ring familiar. The narrator reports: "They'd talked over the department's plight for an hour and broken up with nothing resolved, everyone irritated, Middleton most of all." Eastman's narrative has Middleton (the department chairman and central character) musing over the departmental squabbles, looking for guidance in the journals. He comes to John Gerber's "A Glimpse of English as a Profession" and focuses on Gerber's view that the new traditionalists had to be convinced "that they too . . . were basically teachers of reading. When they taught Beowulf, or Chaucer, or Shakespeare, or Milton, they were essentially trying to teach students to read, to cut through the entanglements of language caused by time, place, genre, mode, and authorial idiosyncrasies to the essential meanings and effects of the text." Gerber's text inspires this epiphany:

> "Precisely!" cries Middleton. "I see it. It's not the so-called discipline I mainly care about. It's not the major or the departmental turf or the jobs of my friends and colleagues — though indeed I do care some about all these things. It has nothing to do with weighted student credit hours. But it's the students. It's their having significant encounters with the major works of the major writers of English literature. It's their learning to read by reading the best, and that learning means the growth of their minds, the increase of their understanding, the expansion of their sympathies, the disciplined enlargement of their imaginations," He likes having said it so much he says it again: "learning to read by reading the best."

The point of all this is Middleton's epiphany: "learning to read by reading the best" may be the clarifying statement of purpose for our literature program. If it isn't, then it's a good example of the sort of statement we need to formulate.

Finally, I'd like to create a bit of "negative discard." In the Sack-



ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges

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Yourman speed reading materials, students are taught to recognize that some paragraphs consist of a series of statements, facts, and examples that show what the writer is NOT writing about: thus, when such a paragraph of negatives is recognized, the speedy reader discards it in her search for the main idea. What follows, then, is a list (with notes) of the factors I can think of that explain why literature enrollments are down. Perhaps a listing of these negatives will allow us to discard them in our efforts to determine what the literature program should be. My list:

1. Significant reduction in lower division requirements for the English major.
2. Significant reduction in the number of English majors.
3. Lower reading skills among students in the middle range of ability.
4. Social/economic/political pressures toward vocational courses and away from liberal arts courses. (NOTE: The claim that the country has become more conservative seems spurious. I think it more accurate to say that moderates have become anti-liberal, perhaps as a means of distancing themselves from the excesses of the cultural revolution, which for me is the period between Kennedy's assassination and Nixon's resignation. Since most of us in English have been political liberals, we may be especially resentful of this development.)
5. Impact of both visual (film and television) and audio (radio and recordings) electronic media on the role of texts. (NOTE: Contrary to the childhood experience of most of us, today most students first encounter many great works of literary art through visual and/or audio electronic media. The issue, in my mind, is not that electronic forms are competing with and replacing print forms, but rather that literature (fictions, other verbal arts) is more widely available in the wider range of forms. This very fact increases the need for students to develop critical skills and the ability to discriminate between the worthy and the trashy.)
6. Low morale of literature teachers, resulting primarily from 3 and 4 (above), thus reinforcing a cycle of decline.
7. Student attitudes toward literature formed in grades 7-12.

That's it. As I said, I don't think our central task is to explain how things came to be as they are in literature programs. So we ought not dwell on these factors, except where they help us rethink the literature curriculum. Instead, I direct your attention back to Drucker's heuristic. I'd like us, as a profession, to commit ourselves to answering those questions adequately.